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James Montgomery.

LIFE

JAMES MONTGOMERY.



BY

HELEN C. KNIGHT.

BOSTON.

GOULD AND LINCOLN.

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L I F E

O F

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

B Y

MRS. HELEN C. KNIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "LADY HUNTINGTON AND HER FRIENDS,"

"MEMOIRS OF HANNAH MORE," ETC.

"—— who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep,
But truly did he live his life."



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P R E F A C E .

WE introduce to our readers James Montgomery.

His English biographers, Mr. John Holland and Rev. James Everett, with affectionate assiduity have issued his life in seven volumes. Precious as the most insignificant memorials of him must be to personal friends, and interesting as are all the links which bind a man to his own country, a great portion of this ample detail possesses little, if any interest, to an American public. It therefore has been our work to sift out from this the true wheat of his life, and mould it anew.

With none of the classic richness of Rogers, the weird originality of Coleridge, the introspective sweetness of Wordsworth, or the fascinating romance of Scott, there is a moral earnestness, an unaffected grace, a purity of diction, which penetrate the heart and place his poetry among the permanent literature of England.

The Christian element of his hymns gave them wings. Besides expressing what the renewed soul has felt through all ages, he gave utterance to many of the new forms

of Christian life, with their corresponding inspirations, thrilling the spirit and firing it with fresh devotion to the Master's work.

Not as a poet only does Montgomery claim our reverent attention. As a model of the Christian citizen, he stands pre-eminent.

Steadfastly promoting public improvements, and patiently fostering every charitable enterprise, catholic in spirit and loyal to conscience, unselfish in his aims and rich in practical wisdom, prudent in counsel and warm in his affections, he identified himself with all the best interests of Sheffield, and took a high place in the confidence and respect of his towns-fellows.

Nor were his labors of love bounded by Sheffield. Welcoming all the new-born activities, which mark the Church of Christ during the present century, he engaged in their furtherance with singular devotedness. And even when age and infirmities might justly have pleaded exemption from duty, a scrupulous fidelity to its claims kept him to his post even to the end.

——“Born to stand
A prince among the worthies of the land.
More than a prince — a sinner saved by grace,
Prompt, at his meek and lowly Master's call,
To prove himself the minister of all.”

H. C. K.

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LIFE OF MONTGOMERY.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS—DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND—MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT
IN YORKSHIRE—CHURCH FESTIVALS AT FULNECK—CELEBRATION
OF EASTER SUNDAY—POETICAL READINGS—MORAVIAN MISSIONS.

“GRACE HILL”—The name, like many other of the Moravian christenings, “Tents of peace,” and “Pilgrim’s resting-places,” has a spiritual significance, pointing towards a religious faith, which cradled, schooled, and carried forward its disciples with a paternal lovingness and care.

It is a settlement in the village of Ballymona, Ireland, founded by that “hardy worker and hearty preacher,” as Whitefield calls him, John Cennick, one of the fruits of the Great Awakening, and for a time teacher in the famous school of Kingswood Colliers. Drifting from the Methodist to the Moravian current of religious life, he established himself in Ireland, where his earnest preaching gathered a “Settlement of the Brethren,” and “Grace Hill,” as it was named, we cannot doubt, became a beacon light to many a lost and wandering one.

Such it became to John Montgomery, a young man in the neighborhood, who left his all,—that all the tools of

some humble craft,—to join the Brethren, by whom for his gifts or graces he was soon singled out to become a preacher of the gospel. In due time John married Mary Blackley, the daughter of a grave and serious matron, and together they embarked their fortunes in the self-denying and perilous labors which have distinguished the Moravian ministry.

The young couple were sent to Irvine, a small seaport in Ayrshire, the first spot in Scotland where these godly men found a footing, and were there domesticated in a humble cottage beside the chapel wall, the pastor

“much impressed
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too.”

Sorrow and joy entered their open door. Death took Mary, their eldest born, a child of eighteen months, who “was the first grain sown in the Brethren’s burial-ground at Ayr.” Then a new-born took its place in the mother’s arms,—James, a son,—on the 4th of November, 1771.

Two others, Robert and Ignatius, afterwards came to be cradled in the lowly parsonage.

James was a yellow-haired boy of sweet and serious disposition. Nature in her manifold forms of beauty early delighted his eye and spoke in tenderness or awfulness to his soul. The round red moon mounting on the hills, the young moon dropping behind the west, the rolling river and the dashing ocean, mingled their voices with the martial pageantry of royal birthdays, and all the sounds and sights of busy life in streets and at shop windows. What wonder and admiration stir the boy’s mind as he looks out on the great marvels of the world into which he is born! or, as he afterwards sung,

“Proud reason still in shadow lay,
And in my firmament alone,
Forerunner of the day,
The dazzling star of wonder shone,
By whose enchanting ray
Creation opened on my earliest view,
And all was beautiful for all was new.”

At home the gentle discourse of his mother, the devout sobriety of his father, the grave mien and godly spirit of the Brethren as they come in and sit by the pastor's hearth, awaken within him reverent thought, and he early feels the presence of the Great Unseen presiding over all things without and within his little hemisphere.

And so, “Heaven lay about him in his infancy.”

After a few years' residence in Scotland, the pastor and his family returned to their Irish home, and James passed from the gentle tuition of his mother to the harder tasks of the village schoolmaster. How much Master Jemmy McCaffery taught the boy we do not know, but the band of music at Gilgoran castle, near by, the castle, and the soldiery, often led away his truant attention, stealthily peeping over the tree-tops to freer and gayer scenes beyond. That James needed better schooling than Grace Hill could then afford, forced itself strongly upon the father, and a school in England was accordingly determined upon.

A tearful parting between mother and child — his warm kisses on her wet cheek — the laughing caress of the baby in her lap — mother's benedictions and childhood's promises — good-byes to familiar things — the stir of a departure about the door, and James has gone — gone never again to have a home, where

“mother, wife,
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow way of life,

Around whose knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol round her feet."

A terrible storm overtook the little Liverpool packet having on board the father and son. The howling wind and groaning timbers filled the boy with fright. He looked into his father's face. It was calm as summer's evening.

"Trust the Lord Jesus, who saved the apostles on the water," said the father. The boy cast himself on the same arm of strength and sweetly rested there. Peace stole over his affrighted spirit, and he sat quietly through the storm.

"I would give a thousand pounds for the faith of that child," exclaimed the captain, more fully perhaps comprehending the peril of his craft. But safely the little packet outrode the storm. They arrived at Liverpool, and the pastor and his son proceeded to Fulneck.

Fulneck is a Moravian settlement in the parish of Calverley, in the neighborhood of Leeds, in Yorkshire. This also had its planting in the Great Awakening. Those familiar with that glorious era of moral renovation in which Whitefield and Wesley bore so distinguished a part, will remember Benjamin Ingham, one of the little band of praying students at Oxford, who were first cross-laden with the name of Methodists, and then crowned with its spiritual effulgence. The singleness and simplicity of the Moravian faith and its element of loving consecration to the Master's work early attracted the attention of Wesley and Ingham, who at different times visited Count Zinzendorf, and took sweet counsel with the Brethren on the continent.

It was in their pulpit at Fetter Lane that Whitefield and Wesley first preached, in their company that the earliest

missionary tours were undertaken, and it was in them that they first beheld the power of that grace, which could fully deliver the soul from the bondage of sin and legal exactions and make it free in the free and glad obedience of joint heirship with Christ, the Redeemer, to the inheritance of the sons of God.

Yorkshire, his native county, was stirred into life by the strange and wonderful preaching of Benjamin Ingham, for the gospel seemed a new evangel in the mouth of this sturdy believer. Rustic and craftsman, high-born and lowly, flocked to hear him. Conscience was aroused; sin and holiness, heaven and hell, redemption and retribution, had a meaning unfelt before. Morals were reformed, personal and family religion rekindled, and little companies of believers were gathered all over Yorkshire, disowned, indeed, by the English Church, and yet, we may trust, living members of that living body whose head is Christ.

Lady Margaret Hastings, sister-in-law of the Countess of Huntingdon, was among the first fruits of Ingham's spiritual husbandry, and it was from Margaret's lips that Lady Huntingdon first heard the language of heavenly rejoicing. Margaret afterwards united her fortunes with Mr. Ingham, and together they spent a life of Christian usefulness.

Some Moravian Brethren followed him to Yorkshire, to ensure whose stay he leased them land for a settlement. It was a rough moor, near rude and boorish neighborhoods, where no seed of good had yet been strewn. And thither they came in 1748, with their farming tools and thrifty habits, their schools and their hymn-books, and Fulneck, with its Bruder-Haus, Schwester-Haus, and Prediger-Haus, became the Moravian Goshen of Yorkshire.

Here was brought James Montgomery at the tender age of six, and committed by his father to the paternal

guardianship of the Brethren. The Fulneck school at that time bore a highly respectable reputation, numbering pupils from every part of the kingdom. The religious character of these schools is very remarkable. Though the discipline is strict, it does not seem to have been severe or irksome. Unlike the tyranny which was exercised, both by teachers over their pupils, and by older scholars over the younger, in other English schools, a genuine friendship seems to have existed between teachers and scholars. While little Robert Southey was unmercifully caned by his master at Bristol, and Coleridge was a moping, friendless, half-starved Blue-Coat boy in London, "drinking small beer from wooden piggins and eating milk-porridge, blue and tasteless, on Monday, pea-soup, coarse and choking, on Saturday, beside an extra cut at the end of every flogging for his ugliness," James Montgomery seems to have been surrounded by an atmosphere of love, and sat at a table spread with good will, and bread as good.

"Whatever we did," he tells us, "was done in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, whom we were taught to regard in the amiable and endearing light of a friend and brother."

Innocent pastimes mingled with daily duties, while birthday celebrations, excursions into the neighboring country, and visits from distinguished strangers, afforded opportunities for longer relaxation from the tasks of school.

Over all these were flung the kindly restraints of the abiding presence of Jesus, the Lord, and a perpetual acknowledgment of his goodness seemed to have become the natural overflow of the heart towards him, as the giver of every good gift.

It was customary for the boys of the different classes occasionally to take tea with each other. At the close of

supper, they formed a circle, hand in hand, and sang a hymn. A change having been made, one day, in the ordinary beverage, the little fellow whose lot it was to say grace knelt down,—"Oh Lord, bless us little children," was the devout utterance, "and make us very good! We thank thee for what we have received. Oh, bless this good chocolate, and give us more of it!" A petition, we presume, in which the little group heartily joined.

The festivals of the church, Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Whitsunday, and Christmas, with their stately and significant emblems, were sacredly observed at Fulneck.

The chapel, in its Christmas adornings, charmed the eyes of the children. Evergreens festooned the pulpit, bearing in front a scroll fringed with fir and holly, with the inscription, "Unto us a child is born." Precisely at five, the organ pealed forth its harmonies, the congregation arose, the clergy entered, and the choir sang its Christmas anthem. Tea was then handed round, and children's voices singing the touching melody,

"Christ the Lord—the Lord most glorious—
Now is born—oh, shout aloud,"

proclaimed their interest in the great transaction.

"I shall not easily forget," says one, formerly a pupil at Fulneck, "the boys' sleeping-hall, a large room containing between one and two hundred beds. It was usual for us to meet there on the evening prior to Easter Sunday. A pianoforte was taken, for the occasion, to one end of this immense room; over it was suspended a lantern, which threw a dim light on a splendid painting of a dead Christ, removed from the Brethren's house. When all had assembled, we stood for a few moments in front of the picture. Then the full-toned piano, accompanied by a French bugle,

broke the silence with one of those airs which for ages have been used in the Moravian Church. This ceased for a moment, and we heard the sweet melody whispering around that vast hall, the whole of which was in darkness, save the spot where we were gathered. Again we mused on the painting, and were almost startled by the breathless quiet of the place. The music recommenced, and we sang that fine old hymn —

‘Met around the sacred tomb,
Friends of Jesus, why those tears?’

“The next morning found us assembled at five o’clock in the chapel, joined by an immense crowd. The service opened with a voluntary on the organ, — the congregation arose, chanting as they walked, ‘The Lord is risen indeed!’ On reaching their places, the Litany commenced, the responses to which were sung by the choir and congregation. On arriving at the part which refers to the church triumphant, we adjourned to the burial-ground, and there finished the service in the open air.

“Those only who have witnessed it, can form any notion of its solemnity. The congregation formed a circle, in the centre of which was the officiating clergyman. The sun had just risen, and was lighting up that splendid scenery, and the mists of the night were rapidly rolling away. In the distance, covering the hill, were magnificent woods; over us the morning birds carolled their early matins and then soared away.

“It was in such a scene we offered this thrilling petition to heaven’s God: —

“MINISTER. — ‘And keep us in everlasting fellowship with our brethren, and our sisters (here mentioning the names of those who had departed since the preceding Easter),

who have entered into the joy of their Lord, and whose bodies are buried here; also with the servants and handmaids of our Church, whom thou hast called home within this year; and with the whole church triumphant; and grant that we may faithfully rest with them in thy presence from all our labors. Amen.'

"CONGREGATION.

'They are at rest in lasting bliss,
Beholding Christ their Saviour;
Our humble expectation is,
To live with him forever!'

"This verse was sung by the vast assembly, echoing along that beautiful valley, and mingling with the hum of bees, the ripple of the waters, the music of the wild bird, and, it may be, with the minstrelsy of unseen spirits. I have since witnessed the religious ceremonies of other bodies; and although it has been mine to minister at the altar of another communion, I must confess I have met with nothing so solemn, yet elegantly chaste, as these services of the Brethren's Church."

While these scenes could hardly fail to have touched the most unappreciative, upon a child of lively and tender susceptibilities they awoke, like the winds sweeping over an air-harp, wild and mysterious music in the soul.

The scenic life thus clothing those solemn truths, which at once kindle the imagination and awe the passions, gives a pictured vividness to the objects of our faith, peculiarly fascinating to the young. Religious emotion is excited, which, though not necessarily connected with moral renovation, deepens in the soul its sense of something lost and something yearned for,—its heavenly inheritance,—where peace is affrighted by no sin and joy knows no chill.

Of the drift of his child-life at Fulneck, James Montgomery afterwards says:—

“Here while I roved, a heedless boy,
Here while through paths of peace I ran,
My feet were vexed with puny snares,
My bosom stung with insect cares;
But ah! what light and little things
Are childhood’s woes!—they break no rest!
Like dewdrops on the skylark’s wings
While slumbering on his grassy nest,
Gone in a moment when he springs
To meet the morn with open breast,
As o’er the eastern hills her banners glow,
And, veiled in mist, the valley sleeps below.

Like him, on these delightful plains,
I taught, with fearless voice,
The echoing woods to sound my strains,
The mountains to rejoice.
Hail! to the trees, beneath whose shade,
Rapt into worlds unseen, I strayed:
Hail! to the streams that purred along
In hoarse accordance to my song—
My song that poured uncensured lays
Tuned to a dying Saviour’s praise,
In numbers simple, wild, and sweet,
As were the flowers beneath my feet.”

Poet-land already loomed upon the vision of the boy: and reverberations of its far off melody break upon his listening spirit.

Will the old Moravian hymn-book, with its quaint lyrics, pilot him there, or, by the subtle intuitions of genius, will he strike out a new track and claim a birthright footing to its prerogatives?

Little license was allowed the boys at Fulneck for general reading. Indeed, upon this point, the pupils were fenced in by severe legislation, bad books being regarded by the Brethren as the quickest corrupters of good morals.

A father once sent his son a small volume of choice selections from Milton, Thomson, and Young, unobjectionable associates one would think; the book, however, must first pass the scrutiny and the scissors of the teachers, when it was returned to the owner, so carefully pruned, that many passages were blotted out and whole leaves were missing.

Poetry, nevertheless, was not wholly interdicted, for we find one of the masters, on a warm summer's day, betaking himself with his class to the fields, and, setting aside the regular recitations, entertaining it with a reading from Blair's "Grave." Most of the boys fell asleep. One attentive listener, at least, rewarded the indulgent master. Little James Montgomery gave himself up to the charms of the hour; and such suitableness and beauty did there seem in poet-numbers, that before leaving the hedge-row delight began to shape itself to purpose, and with prophetic eye he beheld *his* poem one day scattering on others enjoyment like that which he was reaping. Barred as the gates of Fulneck were, poems now and then scaled its walls. The poet's corner of a village newspaper introduced the new Scotch muse, Robert Burns. Blackmore's "Prince Alfred" stirred up brave thoughts and brilliant schemes,

"To grace this latter age with noble deeds."

Two volumes of Cowper came to hand; the books, however, though eagerly read, were laid aside with little relish for a second sitting. Their chaste beauty and exquisite

naturalness found little favor from Master James, with tastes moulded by the mystic element and enthusiastic rhapsodies which then marked the Moravian literature. It required the juster estimate of more exact culture to discern the excellences of the Bard of Olney, which, in time, he was proud to acknowledge and admire.

Stinted as was the intellectual nutriment craved by the boy, and much as there undoubtedly was to elip the soarings of his fancy, the poetic temperament will yet extract a living from the leanest soil; and foreshadowings of its life-work will flash all along through its early paths.

And so we find him rhyming, inveterately rhyming, rhyming in spite of himself, jets if not gems, showing the drift of his inward life.

At ten, he had a well filled volume of his own verses, — gypsy children, we may well believe from the pious strains, which rose morning, midday, and at vespers, from the altars of Fulneck.

Night often found his mind aglow with some favorite theme, nor would he sleep until it had shaped itself to measures pleasing to himself; thus wakefulness became a habit. And when he afterwards so graphically tells us how his

——— “ eyes roll in irksome darkness,
And the lone spirit of unrest
At conscious midnight haunts his breast,
When former joys, and present woes,
And future fears are all his foes,”

we can readily conceive it to have been an autobiographical reminiscence, much to be deplored.

The style of the boy's mind, running from the practical to the ideal, more given to reverie than to study, must needs, we think, have given anxiety to the sturdy fathers

of Fulneck. His French and German were likely to have fewer charms than Kirkstall Abbey, a fine old ruin in the neighborhood, ivy-clad ; or pleasanter it were, to people the odd-shaped fields on the hill-side opposite the school with the teemings of his mind, than to drill it to the regular beat of Latin verbs, or torture it with Greek translations. Accordingly we find a notice or two on the school records, that "J. M. was not using proper diligence in his studies, and was admonished thereupon." And inasmuch as he was destined for the ministry, we may suppose this lack of industry augured ominously for the future, in the estimate of his guardians.

The parents of the boy were not near either by their personal presence or by frequent letters to counsel or to urge him forward : and how far their sympathizing solicitude might have steadied him in the strait path marked out for him, we can never know. When he was twelve, together they visited Fulneck, bringing their two younger sons, Ignatius and Robert, and remained three months at the Settlement, previous to leaving England for a missionary life in the West Indies. The Moravian missions were among the first attempts of Protestant Christians to evangelize the heathen ; and their zealous and self-denying labors, which no arctic cold could freeze and no tropic heat could wither, make a shining page in the annals of Christian valor.

"Keep our doors open among the heathen, and open those that are shut," is a petition in the old "Church Litany of the Brethren."

"Have mercy on the negroes, savages, slaves, and gypsies," was not merely a prayer of the lip, it was often the burden of a lifetime.

And where Greenland hailed,

“from afar
Through polar storms, the light of Jacob’s star,”

and the everlasting gospel smiled on the Red men of

“Ohio’s streams and of Missouri’s flood,
And the sweet tones of pity touched *his* ears,
And mercy bathed his bosom with her tears,”

“the poor Negro scorned of all mankind,” — the beautiful individuality of the invocation, “Bless our congregations gathered from the Negroes, Greenlanders, Indians, Hottentots, and Esquimaux ; keep them as the apple of thine eye,” carries with it all the personal and endearing intimacy of the Christian name.

A happy three months to the re-united family at Fulneck. The parting counsels of these parents, how tenderly faithful ! The yearnings of parental fondness on one side, the soldier-call of duty on the other. The stormy waters must soon part parents and children ; their earthly journey may seem long, very long, and begirt with perils ; but the path to heaven is short, and bright with the beckoning glories of heaven, — *there* may all meet, a re-united family for evermore, among the Redeemed. This is the burden of the pastor’s heart.

December 2nd, 1783, Rev. John Montgomery and his excellent wife again take up their pilgrim’s staff, and leaving their sons in England set sail for Barbadoes. The benediction of the Brethren follows them.

“How precious the work prosecuted at such cost !” This conviction lay far behind, blurred by many tears. Perhaps the children were scarcely conscious of it then, but it seemed to have been a golden thread in their lives afterwards.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL-LIFE AT FULNECK—RUNNING AWAY—HIS JOURNEY—CONSENT OF MORAVIAN FRIENDS—CLERKSHIP—HIS EARLY LOVE—GOING TO LONDON.

LORD MONBODDO, a learned and eccentric Scottish peer, once visited the school at Fulneck, to whom the older and more gifted scholars were introduced; but little heed did he seem to pay, until the bishop said:—"Here, my lord, is one of your own countrymen," bringing forward James Montgomery, who, indeed, had but just gained his birth-right. The judge started, and brandishing a huge horse-whip over the boy's head, cried out: "I hope he will take care that his country shall never be ashamed of him." "This," said James, many years afterwards, "I never forgot; nor shall I forget it while I live. I have, indeed, endeavored so to act hitherto, that my country might never have cause to be ashamed of me, nor will I, on my part, ever be ashamed of her."

However his country were likely to feel, it is certain his teachers, if not ashamed of him, were disappointed in him. Perhaps he did not immediately begin to feel the inspiration of the old peer's hopes.

Admonition did not amend his ways. No growing diligence gave promise for the future. School tasks he undertook with little zest and less success; and reluctantly his

friends abandoned the prospect of beholding him some day in the ministry.

What was to be done with the dallying boy?—a perplexing question, debated over many an unpromising subject since then; and all the more perplexing, if not unpromising, because the difficulty lay more in lack of persistency and purpose than any positive moral obliquities.

What was done? “It was determined,” runs the school record, “that J. Montgomery remain in the school and be prepared for a teacher in the same: when this was told him he seemed to be pleased with it.”

A year passes, and how fares it with the lad? The pleasure with which he received the announcement of his change of destiny, and the stimulus consequent thereon, have faded away, and another record in the school diary informs us that as “J. M., notwithstanding repeated admonitions, has not been more attentive, it was resolved to put him to a business, at least for a time.”

Do we not in our day reverse the case, and the less we know what to do with a boy, the longer send him to school?—school often being a sort of quarantine ground, where boys and girls are suffered to stay until it is ascertained whether they can safely shift for themselves.

Boys stimulated to study by the competitions of school, and provoked to unusual effort by strong but inferior motives, often fall behind and disappoint expectation when those motives have ceased to operate; so, on the contrary, those in whom there is much to be developed, often more slowly come to comprehend themselves; and a life of keen mental activity and the gathering up of great quantities of raw material, to be wrought into a symmetrical and sinewy manhood, may often lie behind the listless glances and laggard movements of an idle boy.

How was it with Montgomery? Disappointing the favorite projects of his friends, and disclosing no marked preference towards any of the common industries of life, his bosom yet thrilled with unutterable longings, and his mind was filled with day-dreams of a brilliant future.

Like Javan, in his "World before the Flood,"

—— "his fancy longed to view,
The world which yet by fame alone he knew;
The joys of freedom were his daily theme,
Glory the secret of his midnight dream;—
That dream he told not, though his heart would ache."

Plainly school was no longer the place for him. So thought the Fulneck fathers, and he was apprenticed to a worthy man of the Moravian fraternity, who kept a retail shop in Mirfield, a neighboring hamlet.

Here he remained about a year and a half, selling bread, writing poetry, and playing with a hautboy,—the latter engrossing the chief share of his attention. The only labor which, perhaps, survives this period, is his paraphrase of the 113th Psalm, which the Archbishop of York was pleased to incorporate soon after its appearance in public, years later, into a collection of sacred lyrics for the use of his diocese. Which gave it celebrity, its poetry or its patronage, it were perhaps invidious to inquire.

What next? "Having very little to do but to amuse myself," Montgomery tells us, "I grew more unhappy and discontented than ever; and in an evil hour I determined to break loose and see the world. I was not bound to my master, and knew that if I left him the Moravians could not compel me to return, though I was only sixteen. You will smile and wonder, too, when I tell you that I was such a

fool as to run away from my master, with the clothes on my back, a single change of linen, and three and sixpence in my pocket. I had just got a new suit of clothes, but as I had been only a short time with my good master I did not think my little services had earned them. I therefore left him in my old ones, and thus at the age of sixteen set out to begin the world." So reasoned and acted Montgomery; like many others before and since, to whom breaking away from the fencings of apprenticeship or home has been by a sort of inward constraint; not tempted by vicious inclinations, or seduced by wicked companionships, but from a force from within, blind, yet imperative, urging on towards another sphere and a more genial atmosphere, where the life-work of the man was found and done.

Though the act be an act of impatient emancipation from uncongenial employment or mistaken views, it is almost always regarded by a man of moral culture, in after years, with regret and sorrow. The perils of the step are then seen; the wounds inflicted upon kind if injudicious friends are then felt; the rude uprooting of affections, to be withered perhaps before another planting, is all realized; and though the end may have sanctified the means, and he, being led in a way he knew not, was led graciously on, yet this cannot altogether chase away the remorseful memories which so often linger around the first rash step.

The mournful hazards of such a course are thus pictured by the poet in after years.

" A star from heaven once went astray,
A planet beautiful and bright;
Which to the sun's diviner ray
Owed all its beauty and its light;
Yet deemed, when self-sufficient grown,
Its borrowed glory all its own.

A secret impulse urged its course,
 As by a demon power possessed,
 With rash, unheeding, headlong force,
 It wildly wandered, seeking rest ;
 Till far beyond the solar range
 It underwent a fearful change.
 Dim as it went its lustre grew,
 Till utter darkness wrapt it round,
 And slow and slower as it flew,
 Failure of warmth and strength it found ;
 Congealed into a globe of ice,
 It seemed cast out from Paradise.
 At length amid the abyss of space,
 Beyond attraction's marvellous spell,
 It lost the sense of time and place,
 And thought itself invisible :
 Though suns and systems rolled afar,
 Without companions went that star."

Montgomery, with his pack on his back, and his poetry in his pocket, takes silent leave of Mirfield, on the morning of the 19th of June, 1789, and starts on the journey of life alone; the great world all before him,

— "where to choose
 His seat of rest, and Providence his guide."

How or where to steer his course he has no definite idea. His aim was to "go south," as adventurers of our day "go west," — London, probably, looming up in the distance, by

"Taste and wealth proclaimed
 The fairest capital of all the world,"—

the Mecca of many an adventurous poet on his pilgrimage to fame.

On he trudged, by hedge-row and dusty road, that quiet

Sabbath day, making this turn or that according to no clear plan, until, at the close of day, he found himself at Doncaster, — surely an unusual way for Montgomery to be spending holy time. Of the incidents of this day and the next nothing is known; if sometimes, parched and fainting under the noonday sun of June, he casts a long, lingering look behind, he does not tell us; if he sometimes thought of parents far away and brothers left behind, the tenderness does not unman him. On he bravely went, and the second night found him quartered at a small inn in Wentworth. There sat the wayfarer, with his bundle beside him on the bench, when another traveller entered, a young man, and called for a pint of ale. The two exchanged civilities. From a bow grew a bargain. In the course of talk, Hunt, for that was the young man's name, told Montgomery his father wanted help, and advised him to come over to Wath, a neighboring village, the next morning, and offer his services. The homeless lad did so. To the shopkeeper he frankly disclosed his history, who willingly promised to hire him, provided the consent of his late master and his Moravian guardians could be gained. Counselling by him to write immediately, James returned to the Wentworth Inn to write and to await the answer. But how to pass the interval?

Wentworth is a small hamlet, under the ancestral wing of Wentworth House, the broad domain of Earl Fitzwilliam, whose courteousness and generosity made him the praise of the country around. The poet-boy betook himself to his room and carefully transcribed a copy of his verses for presentation to the earl, who was then at home. With a fluttering heart he entered the park, and lingered about the daily haunts of its noble master. They met: the boy with a modest dignity placed his humble offering

in the kind earl's hand, and the earl, stopping, read the poem, and rewarded its blushing author with encouraging words, it may be, but what was far more available in the present crisis of his affairs, a gold guinea. And no guinea afterwards, we venture to say, ever possessed the value of this. Here was patronage and profit on the first trial. How did it justify his estimate of the little manuscript, often, no doubt, slighted, and regarded with a jealous eye, by the practical fathers of Fulneck. How did it come, a heaven-sent supply to his empty pockets.

Let us hear the result of his appeal to his friends in his own words: "When I had been on my travels about four days, I then wrote, as I always intended to do, to my master; indeed, I left a letter behind me, declaring in plain terms the uneasiness of my mind, and saying that he should soon hear from me. I wrote to him for a character or recommendation to a situation which I had heard of; conscious that no moral guilt could be laid to my charge, and that in all my dealings I had served him with the strictest integrity. My master laid my letter before the council of Moravian ministers, who met at Fulneck to regulate the affairs of their society, and they unanimously agreed to write any recommendation which I might require, if I obstinately persisted in my resolution to leave them; but instructed him to make me any offers, and, if possible, to bring me back again. He came to me in person, where I waited for an answer. I was so affected by his appearance that I ran to meet him in the inn yard; and he was so overwhelmed with tenderness at the sight of me, that we clasped each other's arms as he sat on horseback, and remained weeping without speaking a word for some time.

"It required all my resolution to resist his entreaties and

persuasions to return, but I at length overcame; and when he left me, the next day, he gave a very handsome written character, and also called on my future employer to recommend me. He also supplied me with money, and sent my clothes and other things which I had left behind."

An interview and result surely creditable to all parties. The charge of ingratitude and want of confidence might have been easily scared up by less candid and judicious guardians; and one is at a loss which most to admire, the frank integrity and inflexible firmness of the fugitive, or the forgiving tenderness of his abandoned friends.

This was the turning point in his life. He had broken open the fold-gate, and was now out on the rough highway of life.

"Had I taken the right instead of the left hand road to Wakefield," he says long afterwards, "had I not crossed over, I knew not why, to Wentworth, and had not Joshua Hunt noticed me there, it is quite certain that not a single occurrence of my future being, perhaps not a single thought, would have been the same. The direction of life's after current would have been entirely changed, whether for the better or the worse, who can tell? I only know that *I did wrong in running away.*"

Montgomery is, then, behind Mr. Hunt's counter, a respectable grocer of Wath, selling flour, shoes, calicoes, and wares of all sorts, to the adjoining neighborhoods. It would, perhaps, be difficult to discern any capital advantage in the change made, save in his own conscious sense of freedom. He is no longer under tutelage; he is his own master; and sufficiently master of himself not to inaugurate his freedom by anything which might cause repentance and shame hereafter.

Wath, called the "Queen of villages" by the partial

affection of its inhabitants, rises pleasantly on a fertile valley, about three miles from Wentworth House. It was quiet and rustic in the days of Montgomery's sojourn, with many legends of the old past nestling in its nooks and crannies. A maypole rose on the village green, the castings of a bell foundry rippled the smooth flow of ordinary life, and a monthly magazine distinguished it above all the villages of England for literary enterprise.

The new clerk, we may conjecture, made small stir in the village circles, for he assiduously devoted himself to business, and spent his leisure hours with his books and pen. Indeed, his grave and serious demeanor invited little familiarity from the gay, while his habitual reserve interposed barriers between him and those whose society and sympathies would have proved a social profit to him.

According to the chronology of a little poem, if it indeed be autobiographical, Wath must be set down as the scene of an early and only love. The identity of the heroine, who gives name to the poem supposed to disclose the secrets of his heart, has sorely puzzled his friends. Of "Hannah" the poet himself gave no clue. Village tradition points to Miss Turner, of Swathe Hall, the young mistress of a fine old family mansion between Wath and Barnsley, where he sometimes visited.

Thus sings he:—

“ At fond sixteen my roving heart
Was pierced by Love's delightful dart;
Keen transport throbb'd through every vein,—
I never felt so sweet a pain.”

After an interval of fluttering hopes and fears, and all the changeful play of passionate emotion,—an interval, how long we cannot determine,

“When sick at heart with hope delayed,
Oft the dear image of that maid
Glanced, like a rainbow, o’er his mind
And promised happiness behind.”

Then

“The storm blew o’er, and in my breast
The HALEYON, Peace, rebuilt her nest;
The storm blew o’er, and clear and mild
The sea of youth and pleasure smiled.

’T was on the merry morn of May,
To Hannah’s cot I took my way;
My eager hopes were on the wing,
Like swallows sporting in the spring.

Then as I climbed the mountains o’er,
I lived my wooing days once more;
And fancy sketched my married lot,
My wife, my children, and my cot.

I saw the village steeple rise, —
My soul sprang, sparkling, to my eyes;
The rural bells rang sweet and clear, —
My fond heart listened in mine ear.

I reached the hamlet; — all was gay;
I love a rustic holiday;
I met a wedding — stept aside;
It passed — my Hannah was the bride!

There is a grief that cannot feel;
It leaves a wound that will not heal;
My heart grew cold — it felt not then;
When shall it cease to feel again?”

This affair of the heart must have had its beginning somewhere at this period; its unhappy sequel may have been several years beyond. Although the poem is believed by his English biographers to have been “founded on

fact," from all we know of Montgomery he seems to us the last person to have made himself the hero of such a tale. This early disappointment may, indeed, account for the single life which he led, eminently suited as he was, from his shyness of general society, and his strong local and personal attachments, to enjoy the "social sweetness" of married life.

Montgomery's first stay at Wath was a year's length; when he formed the acquaintance of Mr. Brameld, the village bookseller of Swinton, in whose humble shop the only evenings which he spent from home were passed. Here ambitious hopes were kindled. Here the poet found an admiring auditor; one who could not only appreciate genius, but find it a market. Brameld had dealings with London booksellers, and with many a scrap of successful authorship did he fire the enthusiasm of the young clerk: unrequited labor, disappointed expectations, hungry, homeless authorship begging bread in London, could not dampen, but only add fuel to the flame. A volume of poems was prepared, which Brameld forwarded to Paternoster Row, followed in a few days by the young author himself. Mr. Hunt parted with his faithful servant unwillingly enough, less sanguine, perhaps, of his success. In the family Montgomery seems to have met with the same friendship which marked his former homes, and which, though it could not woo him to stay, strewed his way with grateful remembrances.

CHAPTER III.

MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE—DISCOURAGING OCCURRENCES—DEATH OF HIS PARENTS—ARRIVAL IN LONDON—HIS WANT OF SUCCESS—CONTEMPORANEOUS GENIUS—NEW SCHOOLS OF POETRY.

WHILE the son is pitching his tent here and there in his wanderings for the Promised Rest, his parents are toiling under a burning sun, and in face of difficulties grim enough to daunt the stoutest faith, for the spiritual emancipation of the poor Negro in the West Indies.

Their original destination was Barbadoes, afterwards changed to Tobago, at the urgent solicitation of a planter, anxious for the Christian instruction of his own slaves, and promising his influence to befriend the mission.

In August, 1789, the missionary and his wife visited the island, whose moral desolations appealed strongly for their stay.

“Attended the usual Sunday service in the town, with Mr. Hamilton’s family,” say they. “As yet no church has been built in the island, and divine service is performed in the town-house. Adjoining to this is the negro market, and the noise they make during the service is such that hardly one sentence of the discourse can be understood. About a thousand negroes are generally in the market-place, and I only saw one at the service. In the evening gave an

exhortation to Mr. Hamilton's negroes. As this is done in the dining-room, and in the presence of the family, the negroes are kept in good order."

"During the following days," says Mr. Montgomery, "I paid some visits to the negroes, but found not one who showed the least desire to be converted. They all ruin themselves in soul and body by the same sins and abominations that prevail in the other islands, and their whole minds seem absorbed in them."

"We received about this time letters from the Synod of the Brethren, informing us that it had been resolved to begin a mission in Tobago, and that we were appointed to enter upon it. God our Saviour knows our weakness and inability; but in reliance upon him we have accepted the appointment, and commend ourselves and the poor negroes in this island to the prayers of all our brethren everywhere."

The French authorities of the island seem to have received the worthy couple with great friendliness.

On their second coming, for a permanent residence, "As soon as the governor heard our names," they tell us, "he gave orders that we should be brought on shore immediately, and sent a soldier to conduct us to his house. He came to meet us, took me by the hand, and assured me, by his interpreter, that he greatly rejoiced at our being at last arrived to settle, and should be glad to render us all the services in his power. Our goods were not examined: the officers placed on board for that purpose suffered them to pass free. The word of Scripture appointed for this day was, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways;' and we experienced a gracious fulfilment of this promise, even in behalf of us, his poor children."

Political disturbances, a mutiny in the French garrison,

the conflagration of a greater part of the town, and the fear of a negro insurrection, for a time barred all missionary labor, and self-preservation swallowed up the beneficent plans of the planters.

“You may easily suppose,” writes the missionary home, “that these circumstances occasioned a general terror; for no one knew what hour he might lose life and fortune. Both whites and blacks kept strict watch every night. During this dreadful period we looked confidently to our gracious and Almighty God and Saviour, as helpless children, and, believing he has sent us hither, offered up prayers and supplications to him in behalf of ourselves and the island, that he would in due time silence the storm, dispel all darkness, and cause the light of his precious gospel to shine in the hearts of the poor negroes. We felt his peace amid the tumult, and put our trust under the shadow of his wings. To look out for a settlement in the present crisis is impossible, and no house could be procured with safety.”

The storm at length lulling, a house was obtained, to which they removed from the hospitable mansion of Mr. Hamilton, through whose urgent solicitations the Brethren sent them thither.

“The texts appointed for the day on which we began our housekeeping as missionaries,” say they, “were remarkably suitable. ‘He bringeth them unto their desired haven; therefore let them exalt him in the congregation of the people.’ ‘He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’”

So are the children of God fed with Living Manna, until “their paths,” though struck in a parched wilderness, “drop fatness.”

Of the hindrances which stared them in the face they tell us: “Between our house and the town is a plain along

the sea-coast, upon which all kinds of diversion are practised on a Sunday afternoon. All the negroes who would come to us from the town must pass close by this place ; and thus it seems as if Satan had pitched his camp opposite to us, and would not suffer any one to pass to hear the gospel."

In spite of discouragements, the missionaries began their labors with unflinching zeal, visiting the plantations, preaching, instructing, counselling, as time and opportunity offered. Cabin and hall were alike opened to them.

But the season seems to have been attended with unusual disaster. In a few weeks one of those hurricanes broke over the island, which carry such swift and sudden desolation over land and sea. Vessels were driven ashore ; sugar cane and sugar works melted before the blast ; houses were levelled ; and men, women, and children were more or less injured by the flying rafters and drenching rains. Mrs. Montgomery was ill at the time, and in consequence of exposure to the peltings of this pitiless storm her recovery was retarded ; but of personal sufferings the husband makes little account in his letter home, summing up, at the date of September 6th, 1790, the results of his first quarter's labors on the island.

"I have not been able, hitherto, to gain the attention of the town negroes ; I shall therefore direct myself more and more to the plantation negroes, and Mr. Hamilton has kindly offered to procure a house for this purpose. Though many gentlemen promised their aid in supporting the mission, yet I plainly perceive the burden will fall chiefly upon Mr. Hamilton. Some of those who subscribed to the paper sent to the Synod have left the island ; others are dead. Some think that the Revolution in France has put an end to all success, and discontinue their subscriptions ; others have become discouraged by the misfortunes that have

lately befallen them. Some who formerly gave me pressing invitations to preach on their estates, never mention a word of it now ; but our greatest grief is, that we have not as yet found a single soul that seeks a Saviour."

Dark as the picture is, darker shadows fall over it, when, two months later, Mary, the devoted wife, leaves her husband alone.

She died on the 23d of October. And so gentle was her leave-taking, so sweetly leaned the bereaved one upon the Unseen Arm, that an English clergyman, who, with the planter, stood by the bedside of the dying Christian, involuntarily ejaculated, "God is truly present here!"

A snatch of poetry from their gifted son, thus groups, years afterwards, the sad events of this brief missionary pilgrimage:

"My parents dwelt a little while
Upon a small Atlantic isle,
Where the poor pagan Negro broke
His heart beneath the Christian's yoke.
Him to new life in vain they called,
By Satan more than man enthralled,
Deaf to the voice that said, 'Be free,'
Blind to the light of Truth was he.

Ere long, rebellion scared the land
With noonday sword, and midnight brand;
The city from its centre burned,
Till ocean's waves the fire-flood turned;
Then came a hurricane, — as all
Heaven's arch, like Dagon's house, would fall,
And crush, 'midst one wild, wailing cry,
Earth in the ruins of the sky.
Beneath their humble cottage-roof,
By lowliness made tempest proof,
While wind, rain, lightning, raged around,
And tumbling mansions shook the ground;

While rafters through the air were borne,
And trees were from their roots upturned;
Vessels affrighted sought the strand,
And ploughed long furrows on the land;—
My father bowed his aching head
About my mother's dying bed;
From lip to lip, from heart to heart,
Passed the few parting words — 'We part!
But echoed back, though unexpressed,
'We meet again!' — rose on each breast:
Amidst the elemental strife,
That was the brightest hour of life:
Eternity outshone the tomb,
The power of God was in the room."

"She is now at rest, but her great gain is a heavy loss to me," writes the solitary man from his island house, no longer home to him. "May the Lord our Saviour comfort me! He is my only refuge, and I confess, to his praise, I feel his presence and peace in an abundant degree. As to futurity, I commit myself and the Mission into his gracious direction and care."

As there was no churchyard or "God's acre" in the town, every family burying its dead on its own estate, a corner of their little garden received the dear remains of the departed one. No stone marks her grave, but a green mound, grown over with tropical luxuriance, is pointed out as the last resting-place of this pious woman, typical, perhaps, that her spiritual seed shall yet inherit the land, and rise up to call her blessed. A few months after, her husband, borne down by sickness, left the island and came for comfort and nursing to his brethren in Barbadoes: all efforts were used to restore his health, but without success, and "he fell happily asleep, rejoicing in God his Saviour,"

on the 27th of June, 1791. In a secluded spot, fenced around by tamarind trees, the traveller is shown the burying-place of Sharon, the Moravian station, where Rev. John Montgomery, one of its early and most devoted missionaries, rests from his earthly toils.

In his "Departed Days," the son passes from the checkered scenes of their earthly pilgrimage to catch a glimpse of the rewards of the faithful beyond.

"My father — mother ; — parents now no more !
Beneath the lion-star they sleep,
Beyond the western deep ;
And when the sun's noon-glory crests the waves,
He shines without a shadow on their graves.

Sweet seas and smiling shores !
Where no tornado-demon roars,
Resembling that celestial clime,
Where with the spirits of the Blest,
Beyond the hurricane of Time,
From all their toils my parents rest ;
There skies, eternally serene,
Diffuse ambrosial balm
Through sylvan isles forever green,
O'er seas forever calm ;
While saints and angels, kindling in his rays,
On the full glory of the Godhead gaze,
And taste and prove, in that transporting sight,
Joy without sorrow, without darkness light."

No one was sent to supply Mr. Montgomery's place at Tobago for several years, until, at the urgent solicitation of Mr. Hamilton, who seems to have been a life-long friend to the cause, the mission was renewed. The death of that gentleman soon after occurring, in conjunction with other unfavorable tokens, the island was abandoned in 1803, and

their efforts to evangelize its negro population were reckoned for a time among the "unsuccessful missions" of the United Brethren.

A heavy failure;—"perils oft," heartaching separations, sweating toil, pitying tears, pleadings of mercy, importunate prayer from how many a Brethren's circle, from Greenland's icy mountain

"To India's coral strand,"

the sacrifice of life itself,—a costly outlay of most precious things; and yet, a failure! Such failures are no strange anomalies in the history of the Church; and, altogether, are they failures? Who can pronounce them to be? In the long struggle, who can tell what strengthening of spiritual forces there may yet have been; what evolving of new powers; what refining of the silver; what castings off of dross; how many prayers were laid up in the golden censor before the Throne of God? What may seem defeat to us, may be only the obstructions of a little estuary to the advancing tide of God's Kingdom, "*which shall cover the earth, even as the waters cover the sea.*"

To be the inheritors of an ancestry rich in faith and good works, is to possess a most royal legacy; gold cannot buy it, neither can silver be the measure of its worth. This legacy did the three English orphan boys, James, Robert, and Ignatius Montgomery, come into possession of; and how they proved themselves not unworthy of their lineage, this brief volume will in some measure disclose.

But they are as yet ignorant of their orphanage: the two younger are still at Fulneck, and of James, what offers and opens to him in London?

With letters of introduction and recommendation from his friend Brameld, the young poet presents himself to Mr.

Harrison, an efficient publisher and bookseller of Paternoster Row, himself also an author, and, with an author's sympathies, supposed to look favorably upon the pages of the little manuscript already in his hand.

The poems he declined to publish, but blunted the edge of his refusal with the offer of a clerkship in his establishment, besides words of kindly encouragement to cultivate the talents, shadowed but dimly, we think, in these early productions.

Nothing damped, however, in his conscious ability to do something, Montgomery, at the suggestion of a friend, directed his attention to prose, and wrote a story for children, *Simple Sammy*. The story, though introduced to a publisher who "sold books, bound and gilt, for one halfpenny," was coldly looked upon.

"You can write better than this," said the honest man of trade; "you are more fit to write for men than for children."

The plea that it was his first attempt in prose could not alter the verdict of the publisher; but, as before, gleaming encouragement even in the rejection, the young author betook himself to something for men, and a novel in imitation of the style of Fielding was the result.

The manuscript was modestly put into a publisher's hands on his way to his country house, and left, with what flutterings of hope and fear, it is no difficult thing to imagine.

What sentence will be passed upon it? An anxious and exciting question, stirring in the bosom of the youth, as he presents himself before the arbiter of his fate, on his return to town, envying, perhaps, the calmness of many a culprit at the bar in expectation of *his* sentence from the judge.

"You swear so shockingly," was the brief return, "that I dare not publish the work as it is."

Astonishment smothered his disappointment.

"This," he afterwards tells us, "was like a dagger to my heart, for I never swore an oath in my life, nor did I till that moment ever perceive, as I ought to have done, the impropriety of making fictitious characters swear in print, as they do in Fielding and Smollett, who had been my models in this novel; but swearing was more the fashion of that age than the present."

The harshness of the criticism was, however, modified by the offer of twenty pounds for the manuscript, re-written and expurgated of its offensive qualities. This was done a few years later, but the novel never came to light, which was matter of devout thankfulness to the author in after life.

To show the dauntless industry of the youth, in the teeth of all discouragements, an "Eastern Tale" was shortly completed, and privately carried one evening to a bookseller's counting-room. Its title was condescendingly read, its pages and lines carefully counted, a rapid calculation of its size computed, and the manuscript——returned.

"Sir," replies the cautious book-vender, "your manuscript is too small,—it won't do for me,—take it to ——, he publishes such things."

At this new and unexpected mode of estimating talent, Montgomery made a precipitate retreat, upsetting a lamp, smashing glass, and spilling oil, in the haste of his back-track to the street.

What Derrick wrote of Johnson might apply to the early attempts of many a young author since, tapping at the door of public favor.

"Will no kind patron Johnson own?
Shall Johnson friendless range the town?
And every publisher refuse
The offspring of his happy muse?"

Montgomery certainly fared no better than a great host of writers of both genuine and spurious talent, who only through sore travail of spirit have proved their great life-work, or sunk into that obscurity from which ambition, not bottomed on ability, tried unsuccessfully to lift them.

Glimpses of living authors occasionally gladdened the young man's curious gaze, mostly of local note, scarcely known across the water. The distinguished men whose genius forms so rich a portion of the literary wealth of our time were yet on the threshold of manhood, uncertainly peering into the future, with serious and wondering eyes.

"Nineteen years have elapsed," says Southey, "unsatisfied and aimless in Bristol, since I set sail on the ocean of life, in an ill-provided boat. The vessel weathered many a storm, and I took every distant cloud for land. Still pushing for the Fortunate Islands, I discovered that they existed not for me; and that like others, wiser and better than myself, I must be content to wander about and never gain the port. Nineteen years! and yet of no service to society. Why, the clown who scares crows for two pence a day is a more useful member of society. He preserves the bread which I eat in idleness."

And yet it was not idleness, though it might prove unproductive labor; for the complaining youth had already burned ten thousand of his verses, the same number preserved, with fifteen thousand worthless beside; an amount of scribbling which, with his love of literature, took him from the severer tasks of school.

Coleridge, an unsuccessful competitor for college prizes, and burdened with college debts, quits Cambridge and returns to London, where, if not precisely now, a little later, he strolls down Chancery Lane, a prey to despairing

and miserable thoughts. A recruiting agent crosses his path, and in one of those sudden impulses which unmade the man, he enlists in the 15th Light Dragoons: but a few months of friendly messing and awkward horsemanship were all that marked his term of military service.

The two, Coleridge and Southey, have not yet met to generate their scheme of founding a new republic in the wilds of America, where virtue was to be ascendant, aristocracy elbowed out of the way, and all those social evils which beleaguered society would be forever banished.

Scott, the genial and light hearted Walter, three months older than Montgomery, is at his happy Scottish home in George's Square, Edinburgh. We shall find him in his favorite "den,"—a small room in his father's house, already an old curiosity shop, where Roman coins, a Lochabar axe, and quaint-looking books, reveal the leanings of his mind; or, perhaps, he is climbing Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags, or strolling over Flodden or Chevy Chase, or listening to the stirring stories of the old Highland Chiefs of '45; hoarding up in the capacious storehouse of his memory that multifarious material which he afterwards wrought, with such marvellous skill, into the literary history of England.

Lamb is in the India House, and Rogers is perfecting himself in all the accomplishments of the age; at work also on the "Pleasures of Memory," surrounded by wealth which does not enervate him,—both Londoners and loving London, and thinking, with Madame De Stael, that there is "no scene equal to the high tide of existence in the heart of a populous city."

This period was characterized by the subsidence of that wave of renovated religious feeling which rolled over England and America a century ago, known in the history of

the church as the "Great Awakening," and by the rolling in of that tide of French infidelity and bold questioning of all sacred things, which preceded, and in a sense created, the French Revolution and its attendant horrors.

The effects of that awakening had not, indeed, passed away with the death of the remarkable men who represented it. An improved tone of morals, a more scriptural cast of piety, a deeper sense of accountability for the moral evils of the world, out of which issued the reformatory institutions and missionary enterprises of our day, were its more obvious fruits; and both the church and the nation were better prepared to grapple with the hungry democracy and the fanatic free-thinking which broke out all over England, as well as to recognize what the true spirit of progress sometimes too passionately demanded.

The political tragedies which were enacted, the tumbling down of hoary institutions, the hurried tread of events, the strange and resistless entrance of the Napoleonic element into the politics of Europe, the boiling and seething of fiery political excitements and fiercely debated reformatory schemes, the mighty conflicts between truths and errors, mistaken zeal and a wise conservatism which stirred the great heart of Christendom, undoubtedly had much to do with forming the literary men who adorned the early part of the present century, though we may not be able distinctly to trace either in them or their works the stormy elements which rocked their cradles, swept over their boyhood, and shaped their lives.

In poetry new forms and schools began to appear. While the essence of poetry is the same through the ages, its expression varies with the sinuosities of the times, as the banks and bed of a river change the expression of its waters; now shallow, and now turbid; now idly dallying

with the lilies among the sedges ; now roaring defiance at its rocky barriers ; now rolling with deep and majestic sweep, beautiful and resistless in its strength.

Every epoch is inaugurated by its poets. The old age of an era has little to offer the poet ; its worth has been embalmed and its heroisms sung ; its withered vigor and worn habits may, indeed, give point to an epigram or adorn a tale, but little is left to kindle inspiration, and much to smoulder it : while a new era, through a thousand openings, as the brazen throats of a volcano herald the upheaving within, quickens with its hot breath the intellectual insights and creative powers of genius.

Emancipation from old conventionalities opens the door to a more natural and independent inward life. The poet, feeling himself less amenable to prescribed models, dares to follow his unfettered impulses, and work out, for and by himself, his own ideals of poetic excellence. New forms of society beget more liberal views, a nearer approach to the true vitalities of life, and a clearer view of what is genuine and permanent from what is artificial and transitory. New ways are indeed not easy ways. Critics, born of the past, solemnly and scornfully protest.

“ Cold approbation gives the lingering bays ;
For those who durst not censure, scarce can praise.”

The world is slow to forgive originalities ; while the public, cautious yet over curious, “ ask for more.”

Happy he, who,

“ though the world has done its worst
To put him out by discords most unkind,”

bravely and patiently works on ; strong in inward might,

fervent with spiritual urgency; the storms of sad confusion neither shaking his purpose nor blinding his vision.

“ For, seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as foredone.
* * * * * He looks thereon,
As from the shore of Peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impiety.”

CHAPTER IV.

SETTLEMENT AT SHEFFIELD—NATIONAL DISQUIET—POLITICAL HYMN
—GALES'S DEPARTURE—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IRIS—INVOCATION
TO THE IRIS—POSITION AS EDITOR.

MONTGOMERY'S stay in London did not last beyond a year. His clerkship at Harrison's afforded him a comfortable living, and happily prevented his bringing away any of the sorry experiences, which talent dogged by poverty often encountered in the by-ways of that great metropolis.

Disappointments he indeed had, but those only which chasten, without seriously depressing; serving to bring men to a juster estimate of themselves, and directing them to that toil without which the brightest abilities are vainly given.

Self-help is better than patronage: so Montgomery thought, as he turned his back on London, in the month of March, and took a stage-coach lumbering to Wath, in every respect, we doubt not, a wiser man. Having suffered none of the hardships of poverty, so, also, he had lapsed into none of the corrupting seductions of city life. His shyness of society, and the reflective cast of his mind, while they might have sometimes hindered his introduction to scenes and places favorable to intellectual quickening, helped to preserve that purity of moral principle which was the beauty and excellency of his character.

His old master on the banks of the Dearne cordially welcomed him back, and he resumed his old post at the desk, in his counting-room, to look out for a more fortunate turn to his affairs. Nor was he long waiting.

Collecting accounts one day at Great Houghton, Montgomery took up a newspaper and read the following advertisement: "Wanted, in a counting-house in Sheffield, a clerk. None need apply but such as have been used to book-keeping, and can produce undeniable testimonials of character. Terms and specimens of writing to be left with the printer."

The young man, now just twenty-one, recognized the situation as one which he could suitably fill, and immediately despatched a letter to the advertiser, offering his services, and soliciting an interview. The result was a visit to Sheffield and his engaging the place.

Joseph Gales, his new employer, was printer, bookseller, and auctioneer, — a triad of vocations not unusual at that time; and, in addition, editor of the *Sheffield Register*, a respectable weekly of some note in its day.

On the second of April, 1792, the young man came to his new lodgings in Mr. Gales's family at the Hartshead, where the handsome and commodious shop of his master was one of the most conspicuous buildings on the street; while its shelves, lined with books, must have seemed to the hungry young clerk an inexhaustible supply of daily food.

Sheffield then was not the Sheffield of the present. Its fashionable promenade, — "Ladies' Walk," — is now only a shabby street, with scarce a vestige of its past gentility. Instead of three or four churches, churches and chapels, a score or more, testify to its modern growth. Its famous cutlery has altered in quantity rather than quality, giving

it only wider fame; while the tall chimneys of its great steam engines are monuments of its capital and labor, enriching the rich, and pouring comfort into the lap of honest industry.

Mr. Gales's family, in the bosom of which Montgomery was soon domesticated, consisted of a wife and three children. His father, mother, and three sisters, resided in the pleasant village of Eckington, six miles south of Sheffield, — a delightful summer walk, amid the choice beauties of English rural scenery.

Mrs. Gales was herself a woman of literary tastes, occasionally contributing to the columns of her husband's paper, and the author of a novel in three volumes, of how much local celebrity we do not know.

Thus was Montgomery surrounded by influences agreeable to his tastes, and favorable to his mental improvement.

The author of the *English Garden* lived a few miles off, at the Ashton rectory; and though a "real living poet, who had published a volume," was a sight much coveted by our poet, he never happened to have met with Mason. Who first gratified this natural curiosity we do not find, for it was possibly when curiosity was somewhat abated of its youthful glow.

But if not a poet, a living poem crossed his path, — the ragged proof sheets of the *Pleasures of Memory* from the pocket of a compositor, newly arrived from a London office, where it had been printed. It bore no author's name, and all the printer could reveal of its paternity was that one "Parson Harrison" was supposed to be the writer.

It shortly appeared with Rogers's name, and was received with kindly courtesy in the literary circles of England.

Perhaps we cannot better introduce our readers into the

stirring scenes which marked the time of Montgomery's engagement with Mr. Gales, than by a retrospective glance at them, given in his own words.

“I came to Sheffield in the spring of 1792, a stranger and friendless, without any prospect or intention of making a long residence in it, much less of advancing myself, either by industry or talents, to a situation that should give me the opportunity of doing much evil or good, as I might act with indiscretion or temperance. The whole nation, at that time, was disturbed from its propriety by the example and influence of revolutionized France; nor was there a district in the kingdom more agitated by the passions and prejudices of the day than this. The people of Sheffield, in whatever contempt they may have been held by those ignorant of their character, were then, as they now are, a reading and thinking people. According to the knowledge which they had; therefore, they judged for themselves on the questions of reform in parliament, liberty of speech and of the press, the rights of man, and other problems, concerning which the wisest and best of men have been divided, and never more so than at the period mentioned, when the decision either way was not to be merely speculative but practical, and to affect permanently the condition of all classes in the realm, from the monarch to the pauper, — so deep, comprehensive, and prospective was the view taken by everybody on the issue of the controversy.

“The two parties in Sheffield, as elsewhere, arranged themselves on the contrary extremes; some being for everything old, the rest for everything that was new. There was no moderation on either side; each had a little of the truth, while the main body of it lay between: yet it was not for *this* they were contending (like the Trojans and

Greeks for the body of Patroclus), but for those few dissevered limbs which they already possessed.

“It was at the ‘height of this great argument’ that I was led into the thickest of the conflict, though, happily for myself, under no obligation to take an active share in it. With all the enthusiasm of youth,—for I had not then arrived at what are called years of discretion,—I entered into the feelings of those who avowed themselves the friends of freedom, justice, and humanity. Those with whom I was immediately connected verily were such; and had all the reformers of that day been generous, upright, and disinterested, like the noble minded proprietor of the *Sheffield Register* the cause which they espoused would never have been disgraced, and might have prevailed, even at that time, since there could have been nothing to fear, but everything to hope, from patriotic measures supported by patriotic men.

“Though with every pulse of my heart beating in favor of the popular doctrines, my retired and religious education had laid restraints upon my conscience,—I may say so fearlessly,—which long kept me back from personally engaging in the civil war of words, then raging through the neighborhood, beyond an occasional rhyme, paragraph, or essay, written rather to show off my literary than political qualifications. Ignorant of myself, and inexperienced in the world, I nevertheless was preserved from joining myself to any of the political societies until they were broken up in 1794, when I confess I did associate with the remnant of one, for a purpose which I shall never be ashamed to avow,—to support the families of some of the accused leaders who were detained prisoners in London, under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and were finally discharged without having been brought to trial.”

Mr. Gales, it is seen, affiliated with the popular party. His sympathies were strongly aroused for the unhappy French, in their strivings for an ideal freedom destined not then to be realized; for national self-government can only be attained by a self-governed people. He was consequently opposed to the war which Pitt was determined to wage with France and the Revolution, in preparation for which recruiting agents were in every town enlisting men for the service. A third element of political agitation consisted in the advantage taken of the time to urge parliamentary reform, — a fuller representation of the people in the national counsels, — which, indeed, was no new feature in the politics of the country, Pitt having eloquently advocated it several years before. French successes, not yet excesses, had given new significance to the question, and brought it before the people with all the fresh possibilities of the times, whose clamorous and ill-advised advocacy alarmed the Crown, and intimidated some of its staunchest friends.

In Sheffield, a popular demonstration, in the shape of a public dinner at the Tontine, in celebration of the revolution of 1688, was an offset to the quartering of two hundred cavalry in the town, and the drumming up of recruits on the part of the government. The war prospects cast a general gloom over the country, not only because its avowed objects were not generally sympathized with, but on account of the strain and distress which war naturally brings upon the industry and commerce of a country like that of England, in need of so great a foreign market for her goods.

The *Sheffield Register* was an earnest and able, if not always a prudent sheet, and its large subscription list attests its popularity, having reached, we are told, two

thousand and twenty-five names, a notable number in those days.

Its columns were opened to our aspiring author, a temptation certainly not to be resisted, and various articles, — stories, squibs, satires and sonnets, — from time to time appeared, all having reference to the times, and whatever their pertinence then, possessing no merit to perpetuate them beyond their generation. These, he afterwards mourned over as “youthful follies,” — an indication of the searching self-scrutiny of a sincere Christian; perhaps they were, more justly, only the early fall of unripe fruit for the better perfecting of that which remained.

A royal proclamation having been issued for a public fast on February 4, 1794, the Sheffield “patriots” gave to the occasion their own drift, and assembled in large numbers in an open field: their prayers, speeches, and resolutions, of questionable prudence perhaps, and little more, seen through jealous and excited feeling, were twisted into constructive treason by the government officials, and some of the prominent actors figured in the state-trials of that day. Montgomery furnished the hymn, which has more politics than poetry. What smattering of sedition it has the reader may judge:

“ Oh God of Hosts, thine ear incline,
Regard our prayers, our cause be thine;
When orphans cry, when babes complain,
When widows weep, can'st Thou refrain ?

Now red and terrible, thine hand
Scourges with war our guilty land;
Europe thy flaming vengeance feels,
And from her deep foundations reels.

Her rivers bleed like mighty veins ;
Her towers are ashes, graves her plains ;
Slaughter her groaning vallies fills,
And reeking carnage melts her hills.

Oh Thou, whose awful word can bind
The roaring waves, the raging wind,
Mad tyrants tame, break down the high,
Whose haughty foreheads beat the sky.

Make bare thine arm, great King of kings !
That arm alone salvation brings ; —
That wonder-working arm, which broke
From Israel's neck the Egyptian's yoke.

Burst every dungeon, every chain,
Give injured slaves their rights again :
Let truth prevail, let discord cease,
Speak — and the world shall smile in peace.”

Men had already been arrested and sentenced on charges of sedition and libel ; and that there were men, who, taking advantage of the general fermentation, delighted to spread terror by infamous rumours, and even seriously plotted against the existing government of the realm, there can be no doubt ; but many a trial and subsequent pardon of the criminal prove that “contrsuctive treason” was easily framed, and that generous sympathies, equivocally expressed perhaps, was the head and front of the offending. In the face of fourteen years transportation, the times may have well been deemed perilous, and notoriety was easily gained upon very small capital.

In April, an excited meeting was held at Castle Hill, where the speakers, more vehement than discreet, gave occasion for other arrests. Mr. Gales fell under suspicions, and in times when to be suspected was to be endangered,

rather than run the risk of Old Bailey or Botany Bay, his friends counselled flight. He was sought, but could not be found. And on the following week his valedictory appeared in the columns of the *Register*.

“Could my imprisonment,” adds the fugitive editor, “or even death, *serve* the cause which I have espoused—the cause of liberty, peace, and justice—it would be cowardice to fly from it; but convinced that ruining my family and distressing my friends, by risking either, would only gratify the ignorant and malignant, I shall seek that livelihood in another land which I cannot possibly obtain in this. To be *accused* is now to be *guilty*; and however conscious I may be of having neither done, said, or written anything that militates against peace, order, and good government, yet when I am told that witnesses are *suborned* to swear me guilty of treasonable and seditious practices, it becomes prudent to avoid such dark assassins, and to leave to the *informers* and their *employers*, the mortification of knowing that, however deep their villainy was planned, it has been unsuccessful.”

With this the *Register* closed its career, after an existence of eight years. Mr. Gales's property was attached, and bankruptcy and ruin stared him in the face. He fled to the Continent, and was soon followed by his young family. Crosses tracked him. After severe hardships and privations, he came to this country, and established the *Raleigh Register*. Industry and talent met their due reward. “Gales and Seaton,” the long, widely-known, and able publishers of the *National Intelligencer*, in Washington, are branches of this parent stock, the first his eldest son, and the other the husband of one of his daughters. So has our country been enriched by protection vouchsafed to exiled worth.

Montgomery again found himself adrift. He beheld a pleasant home rudely broken up; fair prospects suddenly blasted; a stricken wife forsaking the dear and delightful intimacies of youth; children driven to poverty. The circle which had embraced him in its genial hospitalities, and the generous man who had taken him to his bosom, were swept away and himself left, a fragment of the wreck. Keenly must he have felt the distresses of his friends, and bravely did he stand by the fallen family, with ready sympathy and timely succor. But in this new emergency, what was *he* to do? Start a new paper upon the old premises? This was suggested. A more serious question,—*where* was the capital to begin with? A gentleman, till then almost unknown to the young man, offered to advance the money and become a partner in the enterprise;—a proof that his stay at Sheffield had been long enough, short as it was, to inspire men with confidence in his abilities and integrity, and to determine in some measure the sources of his own strength.

The last issue of the *Register* contained the prospectus of the new editors, and their sheet was looked for with more than ordinary interest on the following week.

On the 4th of July, 1794, appeared the first number of the *Iris*, wearing the conciliatory head-piece:—

“Ours are the plans of fair, delightful Peace,
“Unwarped by party rage, to live like Brothers.”

The poet's corner of its predecessor had been styled “The Repository of Genius.” This interesting locality in the *Iris* was dubbed “Comptuat, or the Bower of the Muses,” the conceited and unintelligible title being an anagram formed from the initial letters of the names of the Muses.

Barbara Horle, afterwards Mrs. Hoffland, first occupied this Bower in an invocation to the *Iris*, expressive of its principles.

“ Oh say, art thou the bright-eyed maid,
Saturnia's messenger confest ?
Does sacred truth thy mind pervade,
And love celestial warm thy breast ?

Com'st thou with covenanted bow,
Blest signature of heavenly peace,
To lay the wars of faction low,
And bid the wars of discord cease ;

The various forms of good intent,
In one pure social league to bind,
By prudence taught, through virtue bent,
To reconcile the public mind ?

Are these thy aims ? bright vision, hail !
Midst Freedom's clouded atmosphere,
No storms thy genius shall assail,
Nor latent mischiefs hover near.

Fair be thy form, and gay thine hue,
In learning's Tyrian lustre drest,
Grounded on truth's celestial blue,
Tinged from the Muses' yellow vest.

Far may thy glowing beauties shine,
And glad success secure thy beam,
While reason mild and peace divine
Roll o'er the earth their lucid stream.”

Its political platform is more fully disclosed in the following editorial : —

“ We beg leave to assure the public,” says the maiden address of the new firm, “ that every endeavor will be used to

render it worthy of their patronage ; and if a careful selection of the earliest intelligence can recommend it to their favor, they doubt not of its being honored with a liberal support. They profess themselves desirous to avoid, in this publication, the influence of *party spirit*. Like other men, they have their own political opinions and attachments ; and they have no scruple to declare themselves *friends* to the cause of Peace and Reform, however the declaration may be likely to expose them in the present times of *alarm* to obnoxious epithets and unjust and ungenerous reproaches. But while they acknowledge themselves unconvinced of the necessity or expediency of the present war, and fully persuaded that a melioration of the state of the representative body is intimately connected with the true interests of the nation, they declare their firm attachment to the *Constitution of its Government*, as administered by king, lords, and commons ; and they scorn the imputations which would represent every Reformer as a Jacobin, and every advocate for peace as an enemy to his king and country. They pity those persons, whatever their principles may be, who, in trying to defend them, have recourse to the mean acts of vilifying and abusing their opponents ; and they proclaim their own firm purpose to avoid descending to the littleness of personal controversy, or to recriminations unworthy alike of Britons, of Christians, or of men. It is their wish, on the contrary, to cherish, as far as they are able, a good opinion of those who differ from them ; to allow the weight of their arguments, where they really deserve consideration ; to place them in the most favorable view ; and to give their readers a fair opportunity of forming an impartial judgment by a comparison of the best remarks which can be made on all sides. At the same time, they declare it is not their intention to enter themselves as parties on the political

field. For though they shall think it their duty to state the reasonings on both sides of public and interesting questions, they do not conceive it to be at all the proper business of the editor of a newspaper to present his readers with his own political opinions; and whatever theirs may at any time be, it is too much their wish to live in peace and charity with all men, to feel disposed to come forward as angry zealots or violent partizans. Their utmost ambition will be gratified if they shall be able to recommend this paper to the public notice as an authentic, impartial, and early record of the sentiments of *others* on those great political topics which now agitate the world, and of those interesting events which almost every day now furnishes, and which but mark out the present era to the peculiar attention of the politician, the historian, and the philosopher."

A manly, modest and prudent stand for the youthful editor, having wisely improved upon the more demonstrative attitude of his predecessor. In some respects a remarkable stand, when we consider his friendship for the Gales, the fervor of his first political associations, and the natural tendency of the young to espouse all the issues of a party, right or wrong, in which friends have perilled their fortunes. Without changing his real position, he only tries to distinguish between the sour fermentation and the true leaven, assured that candor and discretion in the pursuit of truth afford the clearest light with which to discern it.

The sudden change from a subordinate to a leader must have surprised the young man, and surprised as well as gratified his Fulneck friends.

He thus playfully speaks of himself and the new paper in a letter to a friend: "You were no doubt astonished when you first saw my name annexed to the *Iris*, and perhaps

still more, when you observed the humiliating distance between the *cringing, trembling, gouty* pace of our party-colored messenger of the gods, and the noble, firm and manly gait of the late lamented *Register*. I cannot expect that the *Iris* will ever meet with, nor, in my opinion deserve, the liberal patronage which supported the late *Register*. But as far as my humble abilities can entertain and instruct my fellow creatures, I am determined to exert them to the utmost of my power ; and as I cannot but expect my efforts will meet with at least as much encouragement as they merit, I shall judge of their deserts by that encouragement ; and if I fail to please, I will cheerfully resign and melt into obscurity.”

CHAPTER V.

POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENTS — CHARGE OF LIBEL AGAINST MONTGOMERY — HIS TRIAL — IMPRISONMENT AT YORK CASTLE — RELEASE FROM PRISON — SECOND IMPRISONMENT.

MONTGOMERY is re-homed, and his stay at Sheffield has every prospect of permanency and success. While he occupies the printing office, Mr. Gales's three sisters have come from Eckington and taken the bookstore: like a beloved brother he is received into their household, and the new establishment at the Hartshead is bustling with youthful enterprize.

Our friend had trenched himself in a position not likely to prove dangerous, while it was one of sufficient responsibility and labor to call forth his best efforts and incite to vigorous self-improvement.

What little things may sometimes cloud our sky and bring us into unlooked for straits, he will himself tell us.

"Little more than a month after I had become connected with the newspaper, I was one day called into the bookseller's shop, where business orders were received. There I found a poor-looking elderly man, whom I recollected to have seen in the street a little while before, when I was attracted both by his grotesque appearance, and his comical address, as a ballad-monger. He stood with a bundle of pamphlets in his hand, crying out in a peculiar tone, 'Here you have twelve songs for a penny.' Then he recapitulated

at length the title of each, thus: 'The first song in the book is'—so and so; 'the second song in the book'—so and so; 'the third song'—so and so; and on he went 'so and so' to the end of the catalogue. He now offered me the specimen of an article in his line, and asked what he must pay for six quires of the same? I immediately replied that I did not deal in such commodities, having better employment for my presses; he must therefore apply elsewhere (I believe I named a place where he might be served). 'But,' he rejoined, like one who had some knowledge of the terms used by printers, 'you have *this* standing in your office.' 'That is more than I know,' was my answer. Taking up the printed leaf, I perceived that it contained two copies of verses, with each of which I had been long familiar, but had never seen them coupled in that shape before; at the top of the page was the impression of a wood-cut [Liberty and the British Lion], which I recognized as having figured in the frontispiece of an extinct periodical, issued by my predecessor, and entitled the *Patriot*. The paper also, of which a large stock had devolved to me, was of a particular kind, being the material of certain forms for the registration of freeholds, under a still-born act of parliament, printed on one side only, and which had been sold for waste. On discovering this, I went up into the office, and asked when and for whom such things as I held in my hand had been printed, as I had no knowledge of the job? 'Oh, Sir,' said the foreman, 'they were set up ever so long ago by Jack [Mr. Gales's apprentice], for himself, and to give away to his companions; and the matter is now standing in the types, just as it was when you bought the stock in the office.' 'Indeed!' I exclaimed; 'but how came the ballad-seller, who was bawling out his twelve songs for a penny the other day, to

have a copy?’ In explanation of this, he stated, that he had formerly known him, when he himself was an apprentice in an office in Derby, from which such wares were supplied to hawkers. Hearing his voice in the street, he had called him in for old-acquaintance sake, and, in the course of talking about trade, had shown him an impression of Jack’s songs, by which he thought his old acquaintance might make a few pence in his strange way. ‘Well then,’ said I, ‘let the poor fellow have what he wants, if it will do him any good; but what does he mean by *six quires*?’ ‘Not quires of whole sheets, but six times twenty-four copies of this size,’ was the information I received on this new branch of literature. I then went down stairs and told my customer that he might have the quantity he wanted for eighteen pence, which would barely be the expense of the paper and working off. He was content; the order was executed, the parcel delivered by myself into his hand, and honestly paid for by him. I have often said, when I have had occasion to tell this adventure of my romantic youth (for adventure it was, and no every-day one, as the issue proved), that if ever in my life I did an act which was *neither* good nor bad, or, if either, *rather* good *than* bad, it was this.

“Two months afterwards, one of the town constables waited upon me, and very civilly requested that I would call upon him at his residence in the adjacent street. Accordingly I went thither, and asked for what he wanted to see me. He then produced a magistrate’s warrant, charging me with having, on the 16th day of August preceding, printed and published a certain seditious libel respecting the war then raging between his Majesty and the French Government, entitled ‘A patriotic song, by a clergyman of Belfast.’ I was quite puzzled to comprehend what pro-

duction from my press this charge alluded to, not the remotest idea of the ballad-seller occurring to me at the moment."

A copy of the song was then shown him, which he instantly recognized as the same, sold unwittingly from his office, certainly not with any intention of raising a political breeze.

It was in vain that Montgomery explained the circumstances of the case, or tried to show that it could not be a libel upon the existing war, inasmuch as it was published long before hostilities between France and England began; it having been composed for an anniversary celebration of the destruction of the Bastile, and referring solely to the invasion of France by the Austrian and Prussian armies under the Duke of Brunswick, in July, 1792.

As the matter took a serious turn, a specimen of the song, with its libellous verse, may interest those curious to inspect the "mingled yarn" in our web of life.

"While tyranny marshals its minions around,
And bids its fierce legions advance,
Fair Freedom! the hopes of thy sons to confound,
And restore his old empire in France,—

What friend among men to the rights of mankind,
But is fired with resentment to see
The satraps of pride and oppression combined
To prevent a great land being free?

Europe's fate on the contest's decision depends;
Most important its issue will be,
For should France be subdued, Europe's liberty ends,—
If she triumphs, the world will be free."

The last was the sinning stanza, bristling with treason against the nation.

Unexpectedly Montgomery finds himself in the clutches of the law, and arraigned before the Sheffield Sessions, charged with printing and publishing a false and scandalous libel upon the present just and necessary war. Pleading "Not Guilty" to the indictment, bail was given, and the case laid over to the Doncaster Sessions, a few months later. Meanwhile, through the columns of the *Iris*, he begged his friends to suspend *their* verdict, avowing his willingness to trust his cause to the justice and intelligence of a British jury.

In January, 1795, the Doncaster Sessions came around. The case was argued with no inconsiderable ability and bitterness. The absurdity of seeking to ground a guilty intention upon an act so simple and natural was strongly set forth by the defendant's counsel.

"Did his client foresee, or could any man in his senses ever dream of the mighty injury that was charged in the indictment, as intended to have been done by the publication of six quires of a song, printed long before the present war was ever thought of? My client was applied to by this Jordan, to print six quires of these songs, which he agreed to print for *eighteen pence!* Eighteen pence! six pennyworth of paper, six pennyworth of printing, and six pennyworth of profit! Good God! Will any man believe, in times like the present, when prosecutions are so frequent, and the punishment for libels so severe, that a man not out of his senses, would run his neck into such a noose for sixpence!—would hazard his liberty by publishing anything that he conceived might be tortured into sedition for such a pitiful reward! Surely no! Where then is the intention specified in the indictment?"

But in vain.

The jurors found, that "James Montgomery, printer,

being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and evil disposed person, and well knowing the premises, but wickedly, maliciously, and seditiously contriving, devising, and intending to stir up and excite discontent and sedition among his Majesty's subjects, and to alienate and withdraw the affection, fidelity, and allegiance of his said Majesty's subjects from his said Majesty; and unlawfully and wickedly to seduce and encourage his said Majesty's subjects to resist and oppose his said Majesty's government, and the said war," &c., brought in their verdict "Guilty." Sentence was immediately passed, — three months' imprisonment in the Castle of York, and the payment of a fine of twenty pounds.

The next day he was taken to York, with a modified estimate of the jury box, we may venture to say. His feelings upon the trying occasion are thus disclosed in the *Iris*:

"My trial is now past. The issue is known. To a verdict of a jury of my countrymen it is my duty to bow with the deepest reverence; to the sentence of the law it is equally my duty to submit with silent resignation. It will be time enough to murmur and repine, when I am conscious of having merited punishment for real transgressions. The verdict of a jury may *pronounce* an innocent person 'Guilty;' but it will be remembered that a verdict cannot make him 'Guilty.'

"To a generous and sympathising public, which has been so exceedingly interested in my behalf, I owe a debt of gratitude which the future services of my whole life can never repay. I pledge myself never to relinquish the cause of liberty, justice, and humanity, whilst I possess any powers of mind or body that can be advantageous to my country.

"I should, however, be unworthy of the name of a man, if I did not, on the present occasion, feel the weight of the blow levelled against me; but I should be still more unworthy of that character, were I to sink under it. I do feel, but I will not sink. Though all the world should forsake me, this consolation can never fail me, that the great Searcher of Hearts, whose eye watches over every atom of the universe, knows every secret intention of my soul: and when at the bar of eternal justice this cause shall again be tried, I do indulge the humble hope that his approving voice shall confirm the verdict which I feel his finger has written upon my conscience.

"This hope shall bear me through my present misfortune; this hope shall illuminate the walls of my prison; shall cheer my silent solitude, and wing the melancholy hours with comfort. Meanwhile, the few months of my captivity shall not be unprofitably spent. The *Iris* shall be conducted upon the same firm, independent, and impartial principles, which have secured to the editor so great a share of public patronage. Not long shall I be separated from my friends; their remembrance would shorten a much longer confinement. Soon shall I return to the bosom of society, and oh, may I never deserve worse, but infinitely better, of my country, than I have hitherto done."

The trial excited more than ordinary interest; the temperate policy of the *Iris* and the personal worth of the editor were *à priori* evidence of his innocence, offsetting the natural rashness of youth (for he had but just turned twenty-three), if rashness had formed any part of the transaction.

His business, newly, and of course not yet firmly, established, had need of his presence, so that his term at York was likely to be a serious drawback, if not altogether ruinous to its interests.

The effect of confinement upon a constitution naturally delicate occasioned grave apprehensions, and when to past vicissitudes and thickening anxieties was added the charge of crime, no wonder if his courage faltered, and he became at times the prey of deep depression. The sympathy of the public and the kind offices of friendship brought their healing; conscious integrity buoyed up the prisoner with its strong supports, while his pen and books winged the languid hours of confinement, and made them a profitable period of mental culture.

“God, Truth, and Conscience, are for you, who then can be against you?” closed an address to him from a debating society of which he was a member; “your sentence is a eulogy, your prison is a palace.”

Of his prison employments he does not distinctly tell us; how little springs of enjoyment unsealed themselves all along by the way, he pleasantly records.

“The room which I occupied overlooked the Castle walls and gave me ample views of the adjacent country, then passing from the forlornness of winter to the first blooms of a promising spring. From my window I was daily in the habit of marking these, and dwelt with peculiar delight on the well-known walk by the river Ouse, where stood a long range of well-grown trees, beyond which, on the left, lay pasture fields that led towards a wooden windmill, the motion and configuration of whose arms, as the body was turned about, east, west, north and south, to meet the wind from every point, proved the source of very humble, but very dear pleasure to one with whom it was ever as a living thing,—the companion of his eye and the inspirer of his thoughts, having more than once suggested grave meditations on the vanity of the world, and the flight of time.

“During such reveries, I oftener purposed that my first ramble, on recovery of my freedom, should be down by that river, under those trees, across the fields beyond, and away to the windmill. And so it came to pass. One fine morning, in the middle of April, I was liberated. Immediately afterwards I sallied forth, and took my walk in that direction, — from whence, with feelings which none but an emancipated captive can fully understand, I looked *back* upon the castle walls, and *to* the window of that very chamber *from* which I had been accustomed to look *forward*, both with the eye and with hope, upon the ground which I was now treading, with a spring in my step as though the very soil were elastic under my feet. While I was thus traversing the fields, not with any apprehension of falling over the verge of the narrow footpath, but from mere wantonness of instinct, in the joy of liberty long wished for, and, though late, come at last, I *willfully* diverged from the track, crossing it now to the right, then to the left, like a butterfly fluttering here and there, making a long course and little way, just to prove my legs, that they were no longer under restraint, but might tread *where* and *how* they pleased; and that I myself was in reality *abroad* again in the world, — not gazing at a section of landscape over stone walls that might not be scaled; nor, when, in the castle yard, the ponderous gates, or the small wicket, happened to be opened to let in or let out visitors or captives, looking up the street from a particular point which might not be passed. Now to some wise people this may appear very childish, even in such a stripling as I was then: but the feeling was pure and natural, and the expression innocent and graceful as every unsophisticated emotion and its spontaneous manifestation must be.”

On the 16th of April, the captive is free, “twenty pounds

out of pocket, besides all the vexation and misery which he had suffered." The cost of the trial was ninety pounds, sixty of which were liquidated by his friends. No blush of shame is on his cheek, no stain upon his name. He has only touched the cup which some of England's choicest sons have drank to the very dregs.

The following week the released editor greets us through the columns of the *Iris*, and his cheerful tone falls pleasantly on the ear. There is nothing of the whimpering politician, or a disposition to make capital from his misfortunes; nor is he provoked to abandon his temperate policy by any indignant sense of wrong and injustice done him.

"The generous sympathy of many, very many friends, the prevailing sentiment of the public concerning my conduct, and my misfortune, and the conscious approbation of my own heart rendered my confinement less irksome, and far more agreeable than I could have expected. As I feel no reason to blush for its cause, I shall never regret my imprisonment. I have no wish to complain of any temporary inconveniences or mortifications to which my late prosecution has exposed me: for even my enemies have triumphed less over my fall than I could have hoped from their former disposition towards me, while the generous indulgence and esteem, however little merited, of the humane and the virtuous, have most abundantly compensated for all my sufferings. One solicitude only remains, and while gratitude glows in my heart the solicitude will forever remain, that I may not prove myself unworthy of that share of public and private kindness which I have experienced in my prison, and which has met me on my return.

"My judgment may possibly mislead me, but, while I have no other aim in the exercise of it than to arrive at

truth, I will not fear any consequences which may follow from pursuing the best dictates of my heart. I am not conscious of being influenced by any of those violent principles which have been imputed to me: on the other hand, I detest the spirit of party wherever it appears. And, whilst I hope I can make reasonable allowances for the prejudices of others, I am determined never to sacrifice to those prejudices, on any side of any question, the independence of my own mind. Whatever some persons may say or think of me, no man is a firmer friend either to his king or his country than myself. But I look upon loyalty and patriotism to be best evinced by supporting such measures, and such only, as have a tendency to rectify abuses, and to establish the true honor and happiness of Britain on the solid basis of JUSTICE, PEACE, and LIBERTY."

Moderation and manliness, however, did not save him from further annoyances. And nothing discloses more vividly the fermentation of public feeling, and the liability of a government to become the victim of its own suspicions and jealousy, than many of the prosecutions which took place at this time.

An act passed Parliament in 1795, for "the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," which added fuel to political heats, and opened the way for fresh outrages upon the people.

While this act, with one for "preventing seditious meetings," was passing through the House, the *Iris* spoke of them with regret, and what was more significant, printed them surrounded by a mourning border.

During the winter of '95, the severity of the weather, the scarcity and dearness of food, together with the check to business imposed by the war, aggravated the national and

social disquiet, and added deeper shades to the general gloom. It was indeed one of those straitened periods of national life, which legislation cannot help. Constrained into a necessary but unpopular line of policy, beholding real evils that time alone can right, serious attempts to chastise the impatient and querulous tempers naturally begot by them, too often throw a government on the side of needless severities and unjust retaliations, and divorce it from the confidence and good will of its subjects.

A public disturbance took place in Sheffield, between the military and the people, in the account of which the *Iris* was accused of using unseemly language, and its editor is again in the clutches of the law.

“In the warrant to apprehend me,” he writes to a friend, “I was charged with having printed and published ‘a gross misrepresentation of all that happened’ on that fatal evening; and further, that my account was ‘*likely* to stir up commotions among the people and disturb the peace of the town.’ This charge, as ridiculous as false, has been entirely dropped, and the whole has been cut down into a miserable charge of a libel on the character of our redoubtable *military magistrate*,—without one syllable about *sedition* in the whole indictment. -

“It was both prudent and politic in my adversaries to drop *the most serious part* of this accusation; for a friend of mine had been arrested and bound over to Barnsley Sessions for affirming in the public streets, and in the presence of the justices themselves, that the men shot were *murdered*:—they did not think proper even to *prefer a bill against him*! Is there one word in my whole paragraph which conveys so severe a censure on the hero of that evening? No; but my friend is a vender of stockings, and I a vender of newspapers: the prosecution is levelled against the *Iris*—they are determined to crush it.”

With any such antecedent, no difficulty would be found in convicting him, and James Montgomery is again sentenced to six months in the Castle of York; to pay a fine of thirty pounds to the king; and to give security for his good behaviour for two years, — himself in a bond of two hundred pounds, and two sureties in fifty pounds each.

In consideration of the delicate state of his health, the judges recommend leniency of treatment and every indulgence that can alleviate the necessary evils of his imprisonment. But to York he again goes a *prisoner*, — a unique mode of requiting good citizens, extremely awkward to respectability and virtue.

His paper, of which he was then sole editor (Mr. Naylor having withdrawn from the concern a few months before), was left in the hands of J. Pye Smith, who generously undertook its management during his absence.

“Be firm, cool, and moderate,” counsels the imprisoned editor to his friend; “you can never sink into dullness, if I estimate your talents aright, but beware of being hurried away by generous indignation, *imprudent zeal for truth*, or the dread of censure from *any party*.”

To a friend he writes:—

“Ere now you have read my trial, and know my fate. Will you (though our personal knowledge of each other is small) believe me capable of publishing a willful and malicious falsehood, which, immediately on its appearance, would subject me to all the vengeance of the law; and then, to support it and screen myself from justice, can you believe that I could corrupt and suborn persons of fair and honest character to come forward as perjured witnesses in my behalf? Unless you imagine this, I know, I *feel* your opinion.

“My present situation here may be described in a few

words: the times are so flourishing now, as compared with this time last year, that, instead of about sixty debtors confined in the Castle, the place overflows with double that number; and other prisoners are in proportion. I cannot, on any terms, procure a room for myself; but I have the certain reversion of the first that becomes vacant. I am therefore under the mortifying necessity of taking up my quarters among persons of far different appearance from those with whom I have been accustomed to associate; but I must give the poor men their due, — companions in misfortune, they really pay me the greatest respect, and show me every attention, and do for me every service in their power. You will think my lot a hard one; but is there no consolation at hand? Are not these gloomy walls an *asylum* from the fury of persecutions? At home, and when I am at liberty, it is evident I am never *safe*: here I am *well secured*! why then complain? My dear friend, the worst is over. The torture of the trial, the journey hither, the horror on entering this den of despair, but, above all, the lingering agony of suspense which has preyed upon my heart, and drained my spirits dry, is past. The succeeding six months of my dreary confinement here cannot be more melancholy than the past six: to *know* the worst is far less terrible than to *dread* the worst. My paper warns me to drop my pen. Pray write with your usual freedom — my letters are not *inspected*.

“Your sincere friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Joseph Aston, Manchester.”

CHAPTER VI.

PRISON LIFE—LETTER TO JOSEPH ASTON—"PRISON AMUSEMENTS."
RELINQUISHES POLITICS—POLITICAL FACTIONS—VISIT TO YORK
CASTLE—LETTERS TO MR. ASTON—ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION—
RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS.

A PEEP within prison doors does not necessarily disclose haggard faces and remorseful consciences. Montgomery unlocks York Castle, and gives us a glance at his respectable compeers:

"In this building there are four well-behaved persons, who have lived in the most respectable circles, and seen better days; and also eight of the people called Quakers, who are confined for refusing to pay tithes, though they never did nor ever would have resisted the seizure of their property to any amount the rapacious priest required. There are three venerable greyheaded men among them, and the others are very decent and sensible. One of the old Quakers is my principal and my best companion; a very gay, shrewd, cheerful man, with a heart as honest and as *tender* as his face is clear and smiling. My time, on the whole, passes away in a smooth and easy manner. I employ myself in reading, writing, walking, &c., and never, on the whole, enjoyed better spirits in my life. My friends at Sheffield are become almost enthusiastic in my favor; their number is greatly increased; my enemies are silent, and many of the most bitter have relented: I do not believe there are ten persons who will venture to say I have not

been most cruelly and unjustly abused. My business, which I confess was and is my greatest cause of concern and anxiety, on account of its intricacy, and the care required in its management, has hitherto gone on with almost unprecedented smoothness and success. My health, as I think I informed you before, has been very indifferent. . . . What I am yet doomed to suffer from it, God only knows!"

James Montgomery to Mr. J. P. Smith.

"York Castle, May 1, 1796

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"My captivity now begins to decline down the hill, and I shall only have nine weeks to stay here on Tuesday next; but I fear I shall not return immediately to Sheffield: the doctors here say it will be absolutely necessary for me to go then to Scarborough, for the benefit of sea-bathing and drinking, at least a fortnight. Of this I apprise you thus early, that if I should be obliged to go there, you may be prepared to indulge me with your kind and valuable services a few weeks longer than we expected. . . . The management and arrangement of the *Iris* has continued to afford me much satisfaction. I shall tremble when I resume it with my own hands, lest its credit should fall with the resignation of its present editor. But tell that editor from me not to hack and hew Pitt quite so much in the London news, and to be particularly careful in the Sheffield news, not to insert any home occurrence without the most indubitable authority."

"My time of confinement draws to a close," he writes again, "but my sentence is a Cerberus with three heads—fine, imprisonment, and bail. Thus even when I leave this dreadful place, after six months' confinement, and paying

thirty pounds, I am still to be indebted to two friends for the miserable privilege of being a prisoner at large two years longer! I cannot think with patience on the subject; but I must submit; and it is as well to do so with a good grace as with a bad one. I hope to be released on the 5th of July; and in a fortnight afterwards shall probably be once more in Sheffield. I wonder what evil star led me thither at first! I propose to spend a fortnight at Scarboro'. Farewell; and may you enjoy health, peace, and every temporal prosperity in the bosom of your family and among your friends, without ever being torn from them as I have been!"

The 5th of July set him free, and he thus descants of the sweets of freedom:

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Scarboro', July 10, 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"On Tuesday last I was duly liberated from my long and cruel captivity, and the same evening arrived at this delightful place. A greater contrast can scarcely be imagined than the narrow circumference of a prison and the boundless immensity of the ocean. I am charmed with the romantic beauties of this place, and my only employment here is to admire them—and to wish to leave them all, to return home as speedily as possible; thus in no situation of life have I ever met with unmingled happiness! But shadow relieves the glare of light; the bitter corrects the sweet; and solicitude softens the tone of bliss, which might otherwise transport a simple lad like me beyond the narrow limits of his reason. Part—I may say the greatest part—of the pleasure which I experienced on the day of my enlargement, arose from the solacing idea that you

and many other dear and absent friends were then — perhaps at the very moment of my release — congratulating me in spirit, and welcoming the captive on his resurrection from the tomb of despondency. If you enjoyed my feelings by sympathy, I also participate of your sensations by the same pleasing emotion of the soul.

“To me the magnificence of the ocean and the awful grandeur of these winding and mountainous shores are almost entirely new spectacles; for though I was born in a sea-port, I have never had the opportunity of contemplating such sublime objects since I first came to England, at the age of five years. Though I am very weak, and easily overset, I for that very reason, as much as for curiosity, fatigue myself with rambling from morning till night. I have more than once endangered my neck, by climbing the precipices overshadowing the shore; and it is not improbable that I may yet make a fraction of my head or reduce my bones to decimals in some of my wanderings.

“I hope to put the last touch to my novel here — perhaps by conveying it to the fire; if it should escape martyrdom, — and really it is not worthy of that honor — I may perhaps find some opportunity of conveying it to you before I venture to print it for the benefit of trunkmakers and pastry cooks! I have some thought of publishing, as an experiment, a collection of bagatelles produced in York Castle, under the title of *Prison Amusements*, by P. P. What think you? The readers of the *Iris* have not been disappointed in them. Will that million-headed Hydra, the *public*, accept the sop and not worry the poor author into the bargain?”

Of the literary achievements alluded to in this letter, the novel, one of his London stories revised, never came to light. *Prison Amusements* made their appearance, in-

roducing us to the Piccioli which beguiled the tediousness of his captivity. And if they have not the moral significance of Bunyan's Spider in Bedford Jail, or the delicious richness of the “herb of grace” in the walls of Fonestrella, they show that the grim enclosures of York Castle were not altogether barren of wayside interests.

What says the prisoner? Besides the Wag-tail and the Red-breast,

“Lo! my frisking dog attends,
The kindest of four-footed friends;
Brim-full of giddiness and mirth,
He is the prettiest fool on earth.
The rogue is twice a squirrel's size,
With short snub nose and big black eyes;
A cloud of brown adorns his tail,
That curls and serves him for a sail,
The same deep auburn dyes his ears,
That never were abridged by shears;
While white around, like Lapland snows,
His hair in soft profusion flows.
A thousand antic tricks he plays,
And looks at once a thousand ways;
His wit, if he has any, lies
Somewhere between his tail and eyes;
Sooner the light those eyes will fail,
Than Billy cease to wag his tail.

A melancholy stag appears,
With woful look and flagging ears;
A feeble, lean, consumptive elf,
The very picture of myself!
Blasted like me, by fortune's frown;
Like me, *twice* hunted, *twice* run down,
Still on his painful limbs are seen
The scars where worrying dogs have been;

Still on his woe-imprinted face,
 I weep, a broken heart to trace.
 What rocks and tempests yet await
 Both him and me, we leave to fate;
 We know, by past experience taught,
 That innocence availeth nought :
 I feel, and 't is my proudest boast,
 That conscience is itself a host ;
 While this inspires my swelling breast,
 Let all forsake me — I 'm at rest :
 Ten thousand deaths in every nerve,
 I 'd rather *suffer* than *deserve*."

His feelings, on resuming the editorial chair, are thus portrayed in a letter to Mr. Aston :

" Sheffield, Aug. 6, 1796.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" The post that brings you this hasty effusion, will also convey to you a welcome paper message from an old friend of yours and mine, whom vindictive persecution drove from his native country to seek an asylum in a land where some traces of liberty may yet be found. How often have I repented my madness in not following his fortunes, though warmly invited ! But, in truth, I am not partial to America, and I believe I shall never emigrate thither till banished by imperious necessity ; and God grant that moment may never arrive. I love England, with all its disadvantages, its cares, vexations, horrors, — perhaps my misfortunes themselves have only endeared me the more to my native island.

" I am once more, as you will have seen by the last *Iris*, returned to this town. I confess frankly to you, that I feel a degree of dread and anxiety, which weighs down my spirits exceedingly, on my re-embarking in business, and

again becoming the butt of malice and the mark of envy. A public character is always on the pillory, exposed to the jeers and taunts, the rotten eggs and brickbats of the mob of mankind, who are never so happy as when they are making those whom they feel to be above them miserable. I love fame ; but I cannot afford to pay the price at which it must be purchased. This *luxury*, like all the *necessaries* of life, is now so much advanced in price, that gold alone — not virtue, wit, or genius — can procure it. I have now determined to hazard the publication of my *Prison Amusements*, and may probably add some other trifles.”

“I am divorced from politics,” he says again, “as I think you yourself may perceive by the complexion of my newspaper for these several months past. I will never sacrifice my independence, nor will I join the hue and cry of any party. My principles are precisely the same as they always have been since I could distinguish good and evil ; but I trust I understand them better, and shall be enabled in future to practice them with equal openness, but with more circumspection than formerly.”

His object more than ever is to quit politics, whose party strifes and acrimonious spirit gave him, at times, exquisite pain.

To maintain, however, the neutrality of his paper, often called for fighting no less vigorous than that waged between the factions themselves. The plaint of Watts he could, in truth, adopt —

“Peace is the blessing that I seek
 How lovely are its charms !
 I am for peace ; but when I speak,
 They all declare for arms.

New passions still their souls engage,
 And keep their malice strong:
 What shall be done to curb thy rage,
 O thou devouring tongue!"

A more congenial topic happily courted the favor of the *Iris*, which, for a while, divided with politics the public mind of Sheffield.

This was the endowment and opening of a *General Infirmary* around whose corner-stone all parties grounded their arms, and yielded to the beneficent influences of the occasion.

The theatre gave it a benefit; an epilogue, written by Montgomery, made earnest plea in behalf of the

—— "friendly dome,
 For want a refuge, for disease a home,
 Bidding the springs of consolation flow
 Through every channel of diffusive woe."

The interest of the young editor in the new institution introduced him to the friendship of one of the city fathers, whose friendship it was a privilege and an advantage to enjoy.

Again rings the tocsin of parties; and thus writes Montgomery to his Manchester friend, Mr. Aston:—

"Sheffield, March 6, 1798.

"DEAR FRIEND,

" . . . I have been nearly crazed during the last fortnight with the din of jarring politicians. The mania of Voluntary Contributions towards the promotion of this detestable war, has seized upon the inhabitants of Sheffield, as well as in other loyal towns. There are, however, some persons of the greatest wealth and consequence here, who warmly oppose the measure. A kind of paper warfare has

been carried on between the two parties; I have been employed by the champions on both sides of the question, and have not objected to print rules, advertisements, &c., for either the one or the other. But determined, at all events, to preserve the independence of the *Iris*, I have peremptorily rejected overtures from both sides to insert essays and paragraphs either for or against the measure. This has exposed me to a great deal of censure and illiberality from the violent of both parties; I have been alternately coaxed and threatened by each, but have hitherto inflexibly resisted their importunities and despised their menaces. Circumstances of this kind, however tranquil or moderate I may appear in public, wound me in private to the quick. I am too humble to despise the good opinion of the most insignificant of human beings, but I am too proud to purchase patronage from the most exalted by meanness and servility. On calmly reviewing my conduct, I am perfectly satisfied with it on this occasion; but the exertion of such a haughty spirit of independence has cost me inconceivable agony of mind. When this ferment has subsided, I believe I shall not have lost one well-wisher whose friendship was worth preserving."

He would willingly have been silent on the subject, but neutrality seemed at last out of the question. A gentleman of influence sent in a paragraph avouching the "general and very spirited support" given to the Voluntary Subscription, "equalled to the warmest wishes of its advocates," which he wished Montgomery to publish as his own. The following week, another, on directly opposite ground, was handed in with a similar request, both of which were inserted in the *Iris* with a fearless disclaimer on the part of the editor, that neither contained an expression of his own views, and that he would not give his adhesion

to either side ; the most difficult stand of all others to maintain, as he who has struggled against being appropriated by two contending factions, well knows.

“ In whatever light the conduct of the editor of the *Iris* may be viewed by others,” says the young man in his little sheet, “ he is determined to regulate it entirely by the dictates of his own conscience. Then, if, while sailing between the wind of one party and the waves of another, the little vessel in which he and his fortunes are embarked should be wrecked upon Scylla, or engulfed in Charybdis, he may smile at destruction, and exclaim, with triumphant tranquillity, ‘ *I was not born, I have not lived, I shall not die, a Demagogue or a Parasite!* ’ ”

The determined position of Montgomery not to adopt and advocate the special policies of a party, unless he sincerely believed in them himself, did at this time cost him a friend. The gentleman already alluded to could not move the staunch little poet : patronage had a price, but he could not be bought with it ; and he unhesitatingly gave up its friendly aids, rather than sacrifice his principles and his independence.

Tracing his steps by the light which he gives us, we find him a year after his liberation revisiting the scenes of his captivity.

“ Being summoned to attend a meeting of printers at Tadcaster, I could not resist the temptation of proceeding from thence to York, to revisit the place of my captivity ; to hail the venerable walls of my bastile ; and once more enjoy ‘ the pleasures of imprisonment.’ There is a tender, melancholy pleasure in reviewing past misfortunes, and tracing the scenes where we have formerly suffered. I feel an affection for every spot of ground where I have been unhappy ; an attachment even to the dungeon which I

entered with horror, and quitted with transport: but dear to my very soul is the snug little apartment which I occupied during the last five months of my captivity; — the cage in which I sang of sorrow, till sorrow became familiar and delightful! O, my dear friend, when distracted with the cares of business, and wounded with the disappointments of life, I look back with tender recollection on my prison hours; and had you not *laughed* me out of *crying*, in your critique on my novel, I could weep that they were past. I could fill a sheet with my observations and reflections, as I rambled round the Castle-yard, and recognized the pleasing animals, my former fellow-prisoners, who grazed on the green, and which I used to feed with my hands. The buck — the poor, battered, miserable buck — is grown plump, and strong, and beautiful; and, I am informed, is a very good husband to Nanny the doe, one of my most favorite companions; — she will soon become a mother. The little dog, who forsook his friends and family in the city to come and live with me, happened to be in the yard with his master when I entered; he recognized me in a moment, sprung into my arms, and almost devoured me with joy!”

“Scarcely a day passes,” he afterwards writes to Henry Wormald, one of his Quaker prison friends, “but you occupy some place in my thoughts. As often as I remember York Castle, I always call to mind the many pleasing, peaceful hours we spent together there. How happy should I be to know that you were now, like myself, recalling the scenes of that dreadful place, like a dream that is past! But to the will of the Supreme Disposer of all events we must patiently and humbly submit. He who is Omnipresent, is felt in the dungeon as much [as surely] as in heaven itself; and He, who can do all things, can make a prison a paradise. Such I doubt not you have often found

it; such I hope you find it every day; and such I most earnestly pray you may always find it, while your lot is cast within those gloomy walls."

The long letter closes with, "give poor Nanny, and Billy, and Ralph, each a crust of bread in my name, and tell the gulls I have not forgotten them."

Again he says a few months later:—"Whenever I am uneasy and afflicted at home, which is very often the case—for you know yourself that I am too apt to be gloomy and discontented—when I am thus, I immediately look back at York Castle, and picture to myself those moments in it when I was the most miserable. When, on the contrary, I am cheerful and contented in mind, I fly back with pleasure to my little room in your building. I fancy I see you seated beside me, smoking your pipe and winding your cotton, with poor Billy lying at our feet; and though we are many miles asunder at present, and perhaps may never, never meet again, I sometimes imagine our old conversations restored, and think we are unfolding our hearts to each other. The remembrance of these things will be one of the principal pleasures of my future life, whether it be marked as hitherto, with trials and persecutions, or whether better, more delightful days await me. Absence, instead of weakening the respect and attachment which I conceived for you in prison, has strengthened, and, in proportion as the time becomes distant will, I hope, strengthen it more and more.

"I have observed, with much concern, the slow progress of the Bill now before the House of Commons, in your favor: it is adjourned, and adjourned again, so often, and under such trifling pretences, that I do really fear it will never even reach the House of Lords. I believe you are prepared for the worst, Henry, and that you are as much

resigned as a man and a Christian ought to be under such severe and undeserved calamity. I wish for your deliverance; but if that wish must not be gratified, I wish you may always be enabled, even in the agonizing hours of sickness, and perhaps of death, to bear your sufferings—or rather to triumph over them—with as much fortitude as you have hitherto done. I hope your worthy friends and brethren in misfortune support their spirits and submit to their cruel and infamous fate with their wonted cheerfulness. Remember me most kindly to them all, and assure them of my warm and undiminished friendship.”

“I am anxious to hear your opinion concerning the late events in France,” he writes to Aston. “I know not precisely whether my reflections in the *Iris* on that subject have been just: I wrote them, I can honestly say, with at least as much sincerity as warmth;—but the aristocrats extol them to the skies; they are praised by all the powdered pates in Sheffield; and the *Iris* is now called an excellent, an admirable, a constitutional paper! Praise from such a quarter almost inclines me to suspect that I have gone too far; but my conscience sanctions every syllable which my heart dictated on the occasion. I hate and abhor tyranny under every form, and in every shape; but in none so much as under a republican disguise: the monster then becomes a hydra with a million heads.” In a long letter of a later date, he says to the same correspondent:—“You do not know the thousandth part of me. I am dull, melancholy, and phlegmatic by nature; and am grown indolent and ill-humored by habit. Disappointments at which you would laugh, in the early period of my life have sickened all my hopes, and clouded all my prospects; my mind is grown quite hypochondriacal; and sunk in listlessness, or only roused occasionally by the horrors of religious

feelings, I languish away life without comfort to myself, or benefit to others."

Reviewing this period of his checkered life, and the disappointments, which were but blessings in disguise, he writes; "In the retirement of Fulneck, I was as ignorant of the world and its every day concerns, as the gold-fishes swimming about in the glass globe before us are of what we are doing around them, and when I took the rash step of running into the vortex, I was nearly as little prepared for the business of general life as they would be to take part in our proceedings.

"The experience of something more than two years had awakened me to the unpoetical realities around me, and I was left to struggle alone amid the crowd, without any of those inspiring motives left to cheer me, under the delusive influence of which I had flung myself amidst scenes and into society for which I was wholly unfit by feeling, taste, habit, or bodily constitution. Thus I came to Sheffield, with all my hopes blighted like the leaves and blossoms of a premature spring. There was yet life, but it was a perverse, unnatural life; and the renown which I found to be unattainable, at that time, by legitimate poetry, I resolved to secure by such means as made many of my contemporaries notorious. I wrote verses in the doggerel strain of Peter Pindar, and prose sometimes in imitation of Fielding and Smollett, and occasionally in the strange style of the German plays and romances then in vogue. Effort after effort failed. A Providence of disappointment shut every door in my face, by which I tried to force my way to a dishonorable fame. I was thus happily saved from appearing the author of works which, at this hour, I should have been ashamed to acknowledge. Disheartened at length with ill success, I gave myself up to indolence and apathy,

and lost some years of that part of my youth which ought to have been most active and profitable, using little exertion in my office affairs save what was necessary to keep up my credit under heavy pecuniary obligations, and gradually, though slowly, to liquidate them.”

To his Manchester correspondent he more fully discloses the secret unrest of his inner life.

“Since I wrote you last, I have suffered much anxiety and enjoyed little repose in my own bosom. I feel myself, at the present moment, between ten and twelve o’clock on Saturday night, moralizing and melancholy. I will write, therefore, as far as paper permits, and ease my mind in some small degree, by unveiling some of its weaknesses, its follies, and its vices, to you:—

“There are three springs of everlasting uneasiness perpetually flowing in my bosom,—the cares of life, ambition of fame, and, the worst, the most deplorable of all, religious horrors. With regard to the first,—in my business, chained as I am, like Prometheus to the rock, the vulture of care feeds on my bowels. Since I wrote in September, I have suffered in my mind what I would not again undergo for any temptation which lucre could offer. You may guess what were my sensations, when I tell you, that from the middle of November to the latter end of January, for a trifle which men of firmer minds would have laughed at, I tortured myself with the agonizing apprehensions of again being dragged to Doncaster Sessions. I cannot give you further explanation here; the danger is now past, and the spirit of alarm which harassed my dreams by night, and my reveries by day, is laid to rest. I tremble to tread upon its grave, lest the pressure of my foot should awaken it again.

“On the second point,—my mad ambition,—ever since

last August, my brain has been in the state of Vesuvius during the crisis of eruption. I have been laboring continually upon a spot of Parnassus, which promises to be as unfruitful, as ungrateful to me, as the most barren field I ever cultivated there before. As my plan is still imperfect, and the issue in suspense, I shall wait a little longer before I reveal it to you. If I be successful, I am sure of your congratulations; if I be unfortunate, you shall judge whether I deserved to be so.

“On the last head, — my religious horrors, — I will be candid, as I have always endeavored to be to you. [Here followed five lines, which are blotted out in the original letter, — they probably refer to the happy experience of his early piety at school.] Such has been my education, — such, I will venture to say, has been my experience in the morning of life, — that I can never, never entirely reject it, and embrace any system of morality not grounded upon that revelation. What can I do? I am tossed to and fro on a sea of doubts and perplexities; the further I am carried from that shore where once I was happily moored, the weaker grow my hopes of ever reaching another where I may anchor in safety; at the same time, my hopes of returning to the harbor I have left are diminished in proportion. This is the present state of my mind! I do not know whether you will be able, from this hasty, imperfect sketch, to understand your friend any better: I cannot expect that it will increase your esteem; but I trust, though it may make you think less highly, it won't induce you to think less kindly, of your sincere and affectionate friend.”

“I do not hesitate to say,” on resuming his pen, “that a most solemn conviction is impressed upon my heart, that Christianity, — pure, and humble, and holy, as we find it

in the discourses of Jesus and His apostles,—is equally worthy of its Divine Author, and beneficial to mankind. I believe no human being, of any other profession, can ever be half so happy as a true believer in it,—and why? Because his faith is *certain*; *no doubt* of the *truth* of his religion can possibly remain on his mind; whereas the most enlightened deistical philosopher is at best but [half a line crossed out] a half convert to the opinion he professes. He believes,—not that there *is* a God,—that the soul of man is immortal,—but that there *may be* a God,—that the soul of man *may be* immortal: he hopes for, not expects, a day of retribution: consequently the spur to his virtues is blunt, and the bridle to his vices weaker, than if he were assured of the future reward of the one, and punishment of the other. But my paper is full.”

CHAPTER VII.

SELF UPBRAIDINGS — CONFLICTS AND WAVERINGS — LETTERS TO HIS BROTHER — SPIRITUAL DARKNESS — RIGHT VIEWS OF SAVING FAITH — SPIRITUAL LIGHT — VIEWS ON HYMN WRITING — NOTE TO A QUAKER FRIEND.

THE preceding letter brings us to that period of Montgomery's personal history when eternal things re-asserted their claims upon his attention. His checkered fortunes have hitherto been the battling of circumstances, the great bread-and-butter struggle often necessary at the outset of life to develope what a man is, and to determine his course in the world.

Without the antecedents of friends, fortune, or patronage, to help him in the fight, he has bravely sustained himself, and secured a position of trust and comfort, looking out upon a future of honorable competency and dawning fame.

Fresh sources of unrest now unseal themselves within. He feels that he has drifted from the old landmarks of his religious faith, and is breasting an ocean of perilous uncertainty. A deep sense of spiritual orphanage takes possession of his soul; he is far from his Father's house, and the Living Way is obscured with doubts.

“Oh where shall rest be found,

Rest for the weary soul?

'T were vain the ocean depths to sound,

Or pierce to either pole!

The world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die,"—

such is the mournful utterance of his spirit.

His early religious education he cannot ignore. Divorced from God, what can a reasonable man hope for? Wedded to the world, who has ever found it could satisfy the cravings of immortal want? More than this, it reminded him of the trust he once had in the Saviour of lost men; the peace which filled his bosom when redeeming love smiled upon his penitent confessions, healed the breaches of sin, and made him strong and joyful in the blessed fellowship of holy things.

Early piety and privileges seem more real and precious as he grows older, and with a profound sense of their loss come fearful forebodings of that

——— "death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath."

Though Montgomery had never left the paths of respectable morality, he seems to have abandoned all that distinctively belongs to a religious life. Defection of the heart from God is now bearing its bitter fruit. An enlightened conscience and an unfilial spirit are in conflict. The doctrines of the Cross he cannot reject, while the rebel will quarrel with their strictness. The requirements of the gospel seem harsh and severe without that love which transmutes what seem to be tasks into loyal tributes and holy service to the Lord of Life and Glory. Its renunciations of the world wear an icy look, and he shrinks from their barren grandeur, for he does not experience the rich compensations in store for faithful believers. The anti-

thetic mystery of the Scriptures is not yet revealed to him ; — “dying, yet behold we live” — “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” — “having nothing and yet possessing all things” — than which, nothing so unfolds the riches of redeeming love.

Long an outcast from his Father's house, like the returning prodigal, he began “to be in want.”

The circle into which he was first thrown at Sheffield was of the Unitarian persuasion. No Moravian pilgrims had pitched their tent there. Every year he visited Fulneck, — the Eden of the world to him, — and renewed the endearing intimacies of his boyhood. The Brethren received him with fatherly cordiality, and, we doubt not, strove to renew the defaced piety of their wandering child.

In the light of an increasing seriousness of mind, the witty use of Scripture phrases he abandoned as irreverent and trifling ; a graver tone appeared in his articles ; club meetings at the “Wicker,” where pipes and politics, literature, fine arts, and the social glass, diversified the evening, he felt less relish for ; and finally, preparing one night to go out and meet his friends, he took down his overcoat, but instead of putting it on, he reflected, hesitated, and returning it to its accustomed peg, seated himself at his own fireside, and never resumed his place among the jovial sociabilities of the club or tavern.

More frequently he dropped into the Methodist chapels, occupied at the time by men of fervent piety ; and often he stole to a little class-meeting, in the lowly cottage of a Methodist brother, where, in the happy experience and hearty devotion of these humble believers, he beheld that living faith which his soul yearned for.

From a letter to his brother Ignatius, ordained a clergy-

man, and now teacher at Fulneck, we make the following extract:—

“You see, dear brother, how apt I am to look far before me, much farther, indeed, than I can see; and my heart aches so often, that it hardly knows any other sensations than those of remorse, apprehension, and despondency. I have almost outlived my hopes, in this world,—I mean my worldly hopes. How comes it, brother, that we seldom, perhaps never, seriously turn our thoughts to eternity till we have been disgusted with the vanity, and sickened with the disappointments of time? Why cannot we embrace both this world and the next at once? Is the enjoyment of the one incompatible with the other? Am I to lead a life of self-denial and suffering, as cruel—and, I verily believe, as unprofitable—as the mortifications of a hermit, for the sake, or, rather, as an indispensable condition of salvation? You cannot mistake me here, and imagine that I mean by the enjoyment of the world an indulgence in criminal excesses. I mean only those pleasures which men of strictly moral and conscientious minds think innocent, but against which the Dissenters and Methodists inveigh with a bitterness and bigotry that makes me sometimes imagine that religion is, indeed, a cross on which its professors are condemned to linger out their lives in agonies; but I must not expatiate on this subject, lest I should be betrayed into impiety of speech on what almost turns my brain to contemplate. Yet all this I think I could be content to suffer for the assurance of that peace with God which they profess to feel, and to which I am almost an utter stranger. I have no confidence towards him, except what all the world must have,—a confidence that he is good, and that what he does is right, whether I comprehend it or not; and that if he shuts me up in everlasting

and unspeakable misery, he will convince me first that I have deserved it; and that, even consistently with his infinite mercy and infinite power, he could not mitigate my punishment. But why am I tormenting you with my sorrows? I know what you would answer to all this. I know what way you would point out to me to escape present and future sufferings! I dare not tell you that I cannot lay hold of that salvation which you preach, lest I should be guilty of lying against the Spirit of God; but indeed, brother, I sometimes fear I never shall lay hold of it. Farewell."

Dark and bitter is this letter, — upbraiding and foreboding, — the two elements of a soul convinced of its own short-coming, and vainly imagining a life of self-imposed penance can purchase that peace and joy which faith in Christ the Redeemer can alone give. An experience like this is nothing new or uncommon in religious history; and some are ready to tell us it is the natural consequence of too great severity of doctrine, the morbid helplessness of religious fear. Morbid it certainly is, and we can trace in the author streaks of physical disease, like that which sometimes dimmed the spiritual vision of Cowper.

To another friend he writes: "Since I saw you in Sheffield, I have experienced some severe conflicts of mind. I believe my last letter was gloomy. It set in clouds and darkness; a long night of silence ensued, and the morning of the present effusion is not likely to be more cheerful.

"The affectionate and consoling letter which you wrote in reply lies before me. I have been reading it again as I have done many times before, with renewed and unsatisfied interest. You say, a person cannot help believing what he does believe, so that if we do our duty, by enquiring what is truth, in a conscientious manner, it can be

of little consequence whether we believe accurately or not in all the minutiae of religion. My dear friend, there is danger of misapprehending this doctrine. We may think we are seeking truth when we are wilfully and perseveringly embracing error. The Christian religion seems to me to require such a child-like simplicity, such purity of heart, and singleness of mind, that when I contemplate it calmly, I despair of ever approaching its standard. It is hard to renounce the world, and all those pleasures which the world deems not only innocent, but useful and commendable; and yet, methinks that Christianity requires the sacrifice of them. For my own part, I cannot, at present, take up my cross and follow the despised and rejected Man of Sorrows through poverty, reproach, and tribulation: and yet—you will say it is a strange confession—I carry a heavier cross and bear a deeper ignominy in my own upbraiding conscience: I feel the Christian's sufferings without the Christian's hope of that eternal weight of glory which shall reward them. My mind is not deeply laden with crimes; but unbelief—an unbelief from which I cannot deliver myself—hangs heavy on my heart, and outweighs all those little joys, for which I am unwilling to relinquish the world. I am sometimes sunk in such deplorable despondency, that I feel all the pangs of a victim, under sentence of eternal damnation, without that salutary conviction of the reality of my danger, which might compel me to flee from the wrath to come. But I am not always thus; sometimes a cheering ray of hope—of Christian hope—breaks through the pagan darkness of my mind, and opens heaven to my desiring view. O, then, my friend, how does my heart expand, my soul aspire! . . . Do not be frightened at this picture of your friend: it is faithful, but is drawn in an hour of bitterness; and if I had delayed until

to-morrow, I might have sketched a picture more pleasing, yet not more faithful. I have some good qualities — a warm heart, a weak head, a most despotic imagination. . . . Some cruel disappointments in life, which have preyed, and will continue to prey upon my heart, have aggravated my natural melancholy. The education I received, independently of all these, has forever incapacitated me from being contented and happy under any other form of religion than that which I imbibed with my mother's milk: at the same time, my restless and imaginative mind and my wild and ungovernable imagination have long ago broken loose from the anchor of faith, and have been driven, the sport of winds and waves, over an ocean of doubts, round which every coast is defended by the rocks of despair that forbid me to enter the harbor in view."

A natural melancholy is more fully disclosed in this letter and helps in part to account for his sufferings, whose main cause indeed, lies far deeper than this, — a misapprehension of the truths which he professes to believe. The terms of salvation neither ask nor require this agony of spirit, this long period of probationary suffering as a condition of acceptance.

It is nowhere stated in the Scriptures; it formed no part of Christian experience in apostolic times, nor was it ever preached by Gospel ministers at any time. "Repent and believe," is the simple and single condition to pardon and peace; and whoever makes it narrower or broader shuts the door of hope and heaven to the struggling soul. This duty is enjoined immediately; "now" is called the accepted time; Christ himself guarantees success. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Come!" is it not a word of welcome?

“I will give you rest.” Is it not a simple, unlogged promise, which He who is Lord of all, can most royally fulfill?

The fullness and preciseness of the Scripture doctrine of “turning to God” — “coming to Christ” — “accepting the offers of salvation,” are remarkable, and are apt to be overlooked in the many accessories given to it by the manifold experiences of men. These, in time, are liable to be taken for essential parts, and the mistake cumber the way of many a soul in search of mercy.

Many a sincere seeker fails to struggle into light and comfort, through self-imposed tasks upon his own spirit, directing his eye to false issues, or giving himself to an unwholesome brooding over a single truth, which may paralyze, if naked, but sheathed and blended with other truths, will stir the soul to lay hold mightily on “Him who is mighty to save.”

Child-like faith, a simple taking God at his word, strongly characterizes the piety of both the Methodists and Moravians. This spirit does not linger shiveringly around the frowning abutments of some single truth, afraid lest they fall and crush him, but it glides through the open door of promise into the Inner Court, where wrought into harmony, all the doctrines of the Cross glow with the clear shining of divine love. Here doubts vanish, the burden of sin rolls off, fears are left behind, and to the tearful supplication, “Lord, I believe—help thou mine unbelief!” light, comfort, hope, break upon the soul, and it learns the meaning of that rebuking and searching scripture, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein.”

“O how shall I rejoice” writes a Moravian clergyman to him, “to hear that the horizon of your soul is serene and

unclouded; that doubts and scruples have ceased to agitate your seeking mind; and that you have fully found again that *unseen* but *ever-present* Friend, whose hand has been on you for good thus far; who was the comfort of your earliest day; the dawning of whose love you once felt, — which love alone can smooth the path of life, cheer our gloomy hours, and make the approach of death not to be dreaded! Pardon the liberty I take; my anxious concern for your happiness must plead my excuse, and my own experience makes me thus speak. . . . Convinced I was a sinner, and stood in need of a Saviour, I flew to Jesus, — *simply* and *child-like*: need I tell you the consequence? O my friend! do likewise; be *a child* again, in seeking safety in the arms of your Saviour, and there you will find *rest* for your weary soul.”

Is there not here a glimmer of hope?

“ I stir the ashes of my mind,
And here and there a spark I find
That leaps into a moment's light,
Then dwindles down again in night, —
Yet burns a fire within my breast,
Which cannot quench, and will not rest;
Oh, for a secret, sudden rent
In this hard heart to give it vent!
Oh, for a gale of heavenly breath
To quicken life again from death!”

This halting and dreariness of spirit, Montgomery carried about with him a long time. Light sometimes shot through the cloud, when it again thickened, to pass, however, finally away, and leave him in the blessed sunshine of Christian hope.

To a friend he writes, “I have not room for another word of business; but I turn with gratitude to the most deeply

interesting parts of your letter, on which, however, I must say much less than I think and feel. I was in very deep despondency when your sudden letter came,—sudden I call it, for it darted like an arrow from your heart into mine. It roused, it warmed, it melted me. It arrived, and I read it just as I was going to chapel on Sunday morning, and it well prepared my mind for receiving a consoling sermon. In the afternoon I was obliged to stay at home. I took up a volume of Cennick's most simple, but truly evangelical, sermons, and *opened* to a discourse on the very text which you had sent as the label of your *arrow*, and which had sunk into my soul,—viz., 1 Tim. i. 15. I read it over most eagerly and earnestly, and I was much refreshed and comforted by it. I mention this happy coincidence, because I am sure it will delight you, that you were made on this occasion the messenger of good tidings to me. I am sure that I am not superstitious, but as I am deeply conscious of the omniscience and omnipresence of God, I can never believe that he is an idle spectator of the thoughts, words, actions, and accidents of his creatures. In what manner he interferes with any or with all of these is beyond my comprehension, but that he does sometimes rule them I am compelled to believe; and as we are taught that every good and perfect gift comes from Him, the means through which it comes must be appointed or influenced by him. I did then, and I do now, attribute it to his grace, that these apparent accidents concurred to relieve me, and encourage me to hope in his mercy for final deliverance from one of the sins that most easily besets me—despair; for it is a sin to despair when God proclaims himself to be Love,—despair gives him the lie. You will, notwithstanding this frank avowal of what many would call *fanaticism*, understand that I am no Calvinist: God make me a Christian! and let

those that would be more pride themselves in being the followers of men! Among all sects who preach *Christ crucified* the disciples of Jesus are to be found; they are confined to none; they are excluded *from* none; at least I think so.

“Indeed, my dear friend, I have no Methodist hymns to send you. When I was at school I wrote many, but I have seldom dared to touch holy things since then. My lips and my heart want purifying with a coal from the altar.”

In reply to a gentleman bespeaking an effort of his pen in this direction, he thus feelingly alludes to his unfitness for the work:

“When I was a boy, I wrote a great many hymns; indeed, the first-fruits of my mind were all consecrated to *Him* who never despises the day of small things, even in the poorest of his creatures; but as I grew up, and my heart degenerated, I directed my talents, such as they were, to other services, and seldom, indeed, since my fourteenth year have they been employed in the delightful duties of the sanctuary. Many conspiring and adverse circumstances that have confounded, afflicted, and discouraged my mind have also compelled me to forbear from composing hymns of prayer and praise for many past years, because I found that I could not enter into the spirit of such divine themes, with that humble boldness, that earnest expectation, and ardent feeling of love to God and truth which were wont to inspire me, when I was an uncorrupted boy, full of tenderness, zeal, and simplicity. I have therefore, as you will perceive in reading my little volume, only occasionally touched a chord of the harp of saints and angels, and, though I have started and trembled at the sound which my own fingers had awakened, yet I am not ashamed to acknowledge that those divine ‘incidentals’ have always made my pulse quicken and my heart burn within

me when they occurred. Nay, I know that in several of the smaller poems those sparks of fire from the altar have kindled the whole song into a bright and more beautiful flame, which many of the readers (as well as the writer) have perceived and confessed. Yet I have not dared to assume a sacred subject as the theme of any whole piece that I have written, on account of the gloom and despondency that frequently hung over my prospects and sometimes almost sunk my hopes into despair. At present, I am so deeply engaged with two small pieces on occasions sufficiently serious to occupy all the overflowing spirits that I can spare from the cares and vexations of a business that allows me very little leisure of time, and hardly any of mind, that, though I feel sincerely disposed to gratify myself by fulfilling, at least in a small degree, your flattering request, I cannot pledge myself to make an early attempt. I compose very slowly, and only by fits, when I can rouse my indolent powers into exertion ; so that, unless some very auspicious opportunity occurs, I can promise you nothing in less than two months. However, I will lie in wait for my heart, and when I can string it to the pitch of David's lyre, I will set a psalm to the chief musician."

Extracts from a letter to his brother Ignatius, bearing the date of June, 1807, further disclose his inner history.

" Sheffield, June 20, 1807.

" MY DEAR BROTHER,

" When St. John was in the spirit on the Lord's day, he saw visions of future glory : I am in the spirit also on the Lord's day, and I behold scenes of past happiness, returning like lovely dreams upon me. I am transported to my native country ; I am turned back to infancy, and in the morning of life the Sun of Righteousness is rising upon

me with healing in his wings; alas! how long is it since I saw that sun except in memory's melancholy eye!

“You are now in the land of my birth, and near the spot where I first saw the light: of how little importance is it to all the world besides, that I was ever born at all! Yet to me, how awful is the existence into which I was called without my own consent, and from which I cannot retire, though I were to give myself up to suffering for millions of ages to purchase the privilege of annihilation! Here, then, I am; and what I am finally here, I must for ever be. Is it, indeed, in my own power to choose between eternal bliss and everlasting burnings? If it be, it is truly time for me to awake and look around me, with an earnestness that will make every other concern of life indifferent to me, to see how I shall escape the latter and secure the former;—for to the one or to the other I am inevitably predestined. I have the choice of these two; but I have no other choice.

“Brother! how is it possible that I should hesitate an instant? Why have I not, since I began to write this letter, already by an act of that faith which is the power of God communicated to his creatures, and to which all things are possible,—why have I not already decided my condition for eternity? Is there anything more mysterious in the whole mystery of iniquity, than that a man shall be deeply, dreadfully, convinced of sin, and believe, almost without daring to make a reserve, in all the threatenings and judgments of God,—yet have no confidence in his promises and declarations of mercy? And this is my case, as nearly as I can express it. Yet I do not, and I dare not utterly despair when I look at God; but I do and must despair when I look at myself; and my everlasting state depends upon the issue of the controversy between him and

me : if he conquers, I shall be saved — if I prevail against him, I perish.

“I owe you my warmest thanks for two very affectionate letters, the one from Grace Hill, and the other from Ayr. I am exceedingly glad that you have had the opportunity of changing for a time both your place of abode and your daily occupations. I know — though you never gave me so much of your confidence as to tell me so — that you have more employment at Grace Hill than your powers can support, without frequent and injurious exhaustion both of mind and body : it is true that you are in the service of the congregation, and He who is the Elder of it has a right to all the services that you can render him, and it is your duty — your privilege, I mean — to spend and to be spent for him. Yet I think your brethren ought to lay no heavier burthen upon you, than your strength, well put forth, can bear without sinking under the weight ; for I am sure you will serve them and their master much better by serving them to the eleventh hour, than by laboring yourself to death before the end of the fifth ; for though you may, by a *mortal* exertion, do more work in a given time, you will do less on the whole ; and the Lord’s vineyard is so great, and his husbandmen so few and so feeble, that their lives ought to be precious in their own sight, in proportion to the magnitude and fertility of the field before them.

“Henry Steinhaur arrived last night in Sheffield with a convoy of sixteen children from the neighborhood, who are all Fulneck scholars. Some good has come of my residing in Sheffield. Who knows what eternal consequences may result from so many boys and girls hearing the simple gospel of Christ crucified preached faithfully to them among the Brethren ! It warms my cold, and melts my hard heart sometimes when I think that I may thus accidentally have

been the cause of promoting the everlasting welfare of some of my fellow creatures in this neighborhood, where I came an outcast, and in which I have lived a stranger. The new newspaper which I so much dreaded has hurt me very little as yet; and I am certainly much less frightened at it since it appeared than I was before it came out, when I expected Goliath. but have hitherto only seen his armour-bearer.

“Yours, &c.,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Rev. Ignatius Montgomery, Ayr, Scotland.”

The eternal issues which hang upon the present, feelingly touched upon in this letter, infinitely enhances its “Value of a Moment,” written perhaps at this time.

’Twixt that, long fled, which gave us light,
And that which soon shall end in night,
There is a point no eye can see,
Yet on it hangs eternity.

This is that moment — who can tell,
Whether it leads to heaven or hell?
This is that moment — as we chooso,
Th’ immortal soul we save or lose.

Time past and time to come are not,
Time present is our only lot;
Oh, God, henceforth our hearts incline
To seek no other love than thine!

In a little note, a few months later, to one of his Quaker friends, once a fellow captive at York, we begin to trace a growing consciousness of the endearing relation between Christ and his followers in works of love — the first fruits of a life, in due time, refined and beautified by the spirit of his Heavenly Master.

“I am sorry to learn that you have suffered so much by lameness; but you trust in God,—continue to trust in him, for he will never leave or forsake you.

“As a token of his remembrance, I have enclosed a five pound Bank of England note, which I hope will be serviceable to you in your present low estate. Accept it, Henry, not from me but from Him, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, and by suffering all the ills of poverty, sanctified them to his people. For His sake and in His name receive it; for His sake and in His name I send it. I assure you, my dear friend, that I feel far more pleasure in being, on this occasion, the minister of His bounty to you, than I could possibly derive from any other disposal of this small sum, which I considered to be as sacredly your property, from the moment when He put it in my heart to send it, as it had been mine before. God, who gives it, bless it to you!”

CHAPTER VIII.

EDITORIAL NOTICES — FUGITIVE POEMS — DR. AIKIN — HOME AFFECTIONS — “THE WANDERER OF SWITZERLAND” — ITS RECEPTION — EDINBURGH REVIEW — NEW FRIENDS — DANIEL PARKEN — LITTLE POEMS — LYRICAL BALLADS — SOUTHEY’S ADVICE TO ELLIOTT.

NAPOLEON is now on his march through Europe, and the *Iris* weekly chronicles his ravages: “In his letter to the Swiss deputies, Bonaparte demands an entire sacrifice of all their factious and selfish passions, and in the same breath he sets them a noble example of disinterested moderation, by peremptorily declaring that he will not permit the establishment of any government in the cantons, which *may be* hostile to his own, for Switzerland must in future be ‘*the open frontier of France!*’ He had previously converted the Pays de Vaud into ‘*a highway*’ between his dominions; and we may already anticipate his seizure of the dykes of Holland to supply his table with frogs.” — *January* 13, 1803. “Bonaparte has pronounced his *fiat* concerning Switzerland: a constitution has been recommended to the Helvetic Consulta, and embraced by them with becoming humility. It was received, discussed, and adopted in a day. Since that time a deputation has been dispatched to Paris, from the cantons, to beseech the First Consul to inclose ‘the open frontier of France,’ and annex it to the integrity of the ‘Great Nation.’ Why

does not Bonaparte at once pass a general inclosure bill, and take in all the waste lands in Europe—has he not a common right to them all?”—*January 20, 1803.* “The heart of Switzerland is broken! and liberty has been driven from the only sanctuary which she found on the continent. But the unconquered and unconquerable offspring of Tell, disdaining to die slaves in the land where they were born free, are emigrating to America. There, in some region remote and romantic, where Solitude has never seen the face of man, nor Silence been startled by his voice since the hour of creation, may the illustrious exiles find another Switzerland, another country rendered dear by the presence of Liberty! But even there, amid mountains more awful, and forests more sombre than his own, when the echoes of the wilderness shall be awakened by the enchantment of that song, which no Swiss in a foreign clime ever heard, without fondly recalling the land of his nativity, and weeping with affection,—how will the heart of the exile be wrung with home-sickness! and O! what a sickness of heart must that be which arises not from ‘hope delayed,’ but from hope extinguished—yet *remembered!*” — *February 17, 1803.*

The heart of the editor is glowing with sympathy for Switzerland, in whose rocky defiles and icy fastnesses Liberty has waged, through the ages, its stern and unequal conflict with despotism.

From an interest thus kindled, sprung the first poem which placed Montgomery’s name before the British public among the list of acknowledged poets. Conceived as a simple ballad, it grew to a dramatic poem in six parts. Stirred as was the author by his theme, so distrustful was he of his merits as an artist, that it was three years lagging through his press.

Meanwhile he was paving his way for welcome recognition, by sending abroad, through the columns of the *Iris*, many a little fugitive of the muse, bearing the signature of Alcæus, and gradually winning upon the public attention. Dr. Aikin, at that time influential in certain literary circles, transferred them to the pages of his Annual Review, with flattering notices, most grateful to their modest and then unknown author. Among them are some of the finest fruits of his pen.

The Common Lot, was a birth-day meditation during a solitary walk, on a clear, cold, winter's morning. In this little poem the fellowships of man with man are grouped with a simplicity and pathos which have stamped it with a world-wide fame.

The *Joy of Grief* utters what the bruised spirit hath often felt :

“ While the wounds of woe are healing,
 While the heart is all resigned,
 'Tis the solemn feast of feeling,
 'Tis the Sabbath of the mind.”

The Grave discloses

“ ——— a calm for those who weep,
 A rest for weary pilgrims found :
 They softly lie, and sweetly sleep,
 Low in the ground.”

But from these “smouldering ashes” the poet leaps with

“ The soul, of origin divine,
 God's glorious image, freed from clay,
 In heaven's eternal sphere to shine,
 A star of day.”

Nor is "the pillow, pressed by aching heads," or that

"—— little flower
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky,"

or bird, or "cloud," below or beyond the "picturing powers of his song."

"Most of the pieces of distinguished merit which adorn the Poetical Register are signed with the names of writers already known to the public," says the Doctor. "We observe, however, some with the signature *Alexæus*, which are excelled by none in spirit, originality, and true poetic fire."

Home duties sprung up in the young man's path. "I am glad to hear from you," writes Joseph Gales from this side of the waters, "that my sisters are doing pretty well. Accept, my good friend, of my most cordial thanks for your friendly attention to them. Be to them still, as you have in some good degree been, a *brother* in my stead who am lost to them. And also suffer me to entreat you — though I am satisfied entreaty is unnecessary — to continue to show kindness to the good old folks, my aged parents. I fear they have suffered greatly on my account. O that I could soothe and comfort them as they sink into the grave! But this is denied me. O, do it for me, my dear Montgomery, as you have opportunity!"

Fraternal affections pleasantly reveal themselves in the following letter from Montgomery to his adopted sisters, the Misses Gales, while on a visit to Scarborough :

"My dear friends, you will be curious, if not anxious, to know how I come on in the world of Scarborough. Since I wrote last to you I have outlived a whole generation of

visitors at this house, and am now a kind of antediluvian patriarch of a whole fortnight's standing. In consequence of this, I have been, by the law of primogeniture, exalted to the head of the table, which you may be sure is an honor I most reluctantly accepted, and which I bear most meekly. Hitherto I have had some good supporters about me in some fat and fair ladies, who sit next to me, and among whom I appear like a rush-light among torches. They assist me in carving, and almost entirely save me the trouble of talking, for both of which I am truly thankful. 'How do you employ your time?' you are ready to ask. I employ it so stupidly that I could very well afford to lend six hours a day, on good security, to any lady or gentleman who would pay me handsome interest for it. I eat and drink and walk all day, and try to sleep all night. I never in my life lived so long a time without fire. It is a fact, that I have never *seen* a fire in this house, nor been near one in all Scarborough, except at the barber's shop, to the best of my recollection. There is self-denial with a vengeance for you! I only smoke one pipe at night, and sometimes none. I have several times been out in a small boat for a few miles in the bay. This is very pleasant; and the sea-breezes are like gales from paradise; they warm my withered heart into life, and blow my mildewed cheeks into bloom. One evening I went out a-fishing, and had charming sport. For two hours, in a chill atmosphere, on a dark sea, I watched a cork floating, till my eyes ached and my brain was dizzy; and so intent and expert was I at the trade, that for a long time I was fishing with a *naked hook*, the rogues below having nibbled away the bait. I have often fished along the *stream of life* in this manner. However, on this memorable occasion I caught two fishes; but it was not my fault. I could not help it;

they hung themselves with my line, and I hope they forgave me with their dying breath; and this they ought to have done, because I have freely forgiven their brethren who would not let me catch them.

“I don’t know what to say about my health; and as for my spirits, they have been several times so agitated since I came hither, that, like the sea after a storm, they will be a long time before they can rock themselves calm. Pray write to me soon; and don’t, on any account, forget to tell me how your dear and honored parents are. I was dreaming last night with all my might about you altogether. Give my best remembrance to all my friends who think me worth inquiring after. Have I not been very good to write three times to Sheffield, and never once inquire after my brute creation? Give my love to Bully [the bird], to Blunder [the dog], and what you please to Puss. Tell the garden that I hope it is in good health, and grows well in my absence. Farewell.”

Among his Sheffield acquaintance, there were three drawn towards him by congeniality of tastes and purposes, whose intimacy formed the most delightful portion of his social life: Samuel Roberts, a master manufacturer, whose large and flourishing business did not hinder him from occasionally occupying the poet’s corner of the *Iris*, or harden his heart against the cry of suffering humanity; Rowland Hodgson, a gentleman of fortune and piety; and Mr. George Bennett, a vigorous promoter of all the new evangelical agencies, just starting on their beneficent errands to a sorrowing world. For more than a quarter of a century, these four friends met once a month at each other’s houses, to lay out plans, and to strengthen each other in labors of Christian usefulness. Chantrey’s genius, whose suburban birth made Sheffield proud to claim him

as her own child, was early recognized by Montgomery, and the *Iris* was the first paper which introduced him to the public, and predicted his renown.

In 1805, when he was in Sheffield painting portraits in oil for four guineas, he took an excellent likeness of the poet, from which the engraving in this volume was taken.

January 9, 1806, the *Iris* advertised *The Wanderer of Switzerland*. Three years passing through the press, the edition, five hundred copies, was sold in as many weeks. A second edition was soon printed in London, and the author was offered a hundred pounds for his copyright. This he declined, to accept proposals from Longman & Co., popular publishers in the metropolis, giving him half the profits and allowing him to retain the copyright.

The Wanderer of Switzerland had no reason to complain of his reception. The subject—a patriotic plaint over down-trodden liberties, impersonated in the touching experiences of a fugitive family—was one which directly appealed to the strongest affections and best instincts of the heart. In certain circles it was very popular. And though the popularity of a work at its outset is no necessary proof of genuine merit, it forms an important item in its marketable value. Its success surprised its author, and the generous welcome given it by many of the critics of the day reassured him in this road to fame.

In a favorable notice in the *Eclectic Review*, whose tone was given by such men as Robert Hall, John Foster, Dr. Gregory, and Adam Clark: “We are happy,” ran one paragraph of the editor’s criticism, “to recognize in Mr. Montgomery the Alcæus, whose lyre has often delighted us. He displays a rich and romantic fancy, a tender heart, a copious and active command of imagery and language, and an irresistible influence over the feelings. His shorter

poems are elegant and tasteful; some of them are highly poetical and interesting; others assume a degree of cheerfulness, yet very much softened by an air of tender melancholy. It is in the higher spheres of sentiment that he touches the chords with the hand of a master. From many passages in this volume we presume, and indeed hope, that Mr. M. has had real causes of grief, and that he has not assumed a tone of melancholy, as he might a black coat, from an idea that it was fashionable and becoming. We perceive, with no small pleasure, that his heart is not insensible to religious sentiment: we hope that his religion is genuine, as well as warm, not a feeling merely, but a habit; and that his fine talents are devoted to the service of Him 'who giveth the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'"

This hope a subsequent intimacy amply verified. A correspondence was soon opened between Daniel Parken, Esq., editor of the *Eclectic*, and Montgomery, and long before the two met there existed a delightful and intimate interchange of thought and feeling.

Montgomery appears for a time contributor to the *Review*.

Dr. Aikin, already so much interested in the rising fame of the unknown poet, was more than ever charmed with *The Wanderer of Switzerland*; and when his identity was fairly recognized, no warmer friend had he than Miss Lucy Aikin, the Doctor's gifted daughter, who did not hesitate to declare herself "delighted that the loved Alcæus was at last found out." The Doctor thus wrote him:

"Stoke Newington, January 29, 1807.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your last letter, relating chiefly to the third edition of your poems, I did not feel that it required a particular answer; and having been much occupied with the Athe-

næum, and other concerns, I was not disposed to write more than was necessary. The interval of your correspondence now, however, seems so long, that I am impatient for its renewal; and, besides, I owe you an acknowledgment for the lustre you have thrown upon our first number by your *Molehill*. It has, I assure you, been much admired, and been judged worthy of its author. My friend, Mr. Roscoe, told me he recognized the muse of Montgomery in the first stanza. I know not how to urge you for future contributions, since you ought to have in view a second volume of *virgin* pieces; but whatever you may think fit to bestow on us will meet with a cordial welcome.

“I know not how to condole with you on the increased occupation of your time, that the discovery of your merits by the world has brought upon you. If the effects are somewhat burthensome, the cause is such that your friends cannot lament it. I will hope, however, I shall not be a sufferer from the additional correspondents you are obliged to entertain, but that you will continue to favor me with those confidential displays of your mind which have been so delightful to me.

“We often indulge ourselves with the vague expectation that you will sometime find the call of business or inclination strong enough to induce you to visit London, notwithstanding all obstacles. I scarcely need to assure you that few circumstances would give me so much pleasure as the opportunity of forming a personal acquaintance with you. If you could be persuaded to become a guest in my house, you would find a whole family prepared to regard you rather as an old friend than a stranger.

“Accept our united respects and kind wishes, and believe me, dear sir,

Yours, most sincerely,

“J. AIKIN.”

To prevent any undue elation in the bosom of the gratified poet, the Edinburgh Review, the terror of authors, young and old, shook its paw in his face, with a threatening growl. "A third edition is too alarming to be passed over in silence," it declares; "and though we are perfectly persuaded that in less than three years nobody will know the name of *The Wanderer of Switzerland*, or any of the other poems in this collection, still we think ourselves called on to interfere to prevent, as far as in us lies, the mischief that may arise from the intermediate prevalence of so distressing an epidemic. It is hard to say what numbers of ingenuous youth may be led to expose themselves in public, by the success of this performance, or what addition may be made in a few months to that great sinking-fund of bad taste, which is daily wearing down the debt which we have so long owed to the classical writers of antiquity.

"After all, we believe it scarcely possible to sell three editions of a work absolutely without merit; and Mr. Montgomery has the merit of smooth versification, blameless morality, and a sort of sickly affectation of delicacy and fine feelings, which is apt to impose on the amiable part of the young and the illiterate. The wonder with us is, how these qualities should still excite any portion of admiration; for there is no mistake more gross, or more palpable, than that it requires any extraordinary talents to write tolerable verses upon ordinary subjects. On the contrary, we are persuaded that this is an accomplishment which may be acquired more certainly and more speedily than most of those to which the studies of youth are directed, and in which mere industry will always be able to secure a certain degree of excellence. There are few young men who have the slightest tincture of literary ambition who have not, at some time in their lives, indited middling verses; and accordingly, in

the instructed classes of society, there is nothing more nauseated than middling poetry. The truth is, however, that the diligent readers of poetry in this country are by no means instructed. They consist chiefly of young, half-educated women, sickly tradesmen, and enamored apprentices. To such persons the faculty of composing rhyme always appears little less than miraculous, and if the verses be tolerably melodious, and contain a sufficient quantity of those exaggerated phrases with which they have become familiar at the playhouse and the circulating library, they have a fair chance of being extolled with unmeasured praises, till supplanted by some newer or more fashionable object of idolatry. These are the true poetical consumers of a community—the persons who take off editions, and create a demand for nonsense, which the improved ingenuity of the times can with difficulty supply. It is in the increasing number and luxury of this class of readers, that we must seek for the solution of such a phenomenon as a third edition of *The Wanderer of Switzerland*, within six months from the appearance of the first. The perishable nature of the celebrity which is derived from this kind of patronage, may be accounted for as easily, from the character and condition of those who confer it. The girls grow up into women, and occupy themselves in suckling their children, or scolding their servants; the tradesmen take to drinking or to honest industry; and the lovers, when metamorphosed into husbands, lay aside their poetical favorites with their thin shoes and perfumed handkerchiefs. All of them grow ashamed of their admiration in a reasonably short time, and no more think of imposing the taste than the dress of their youth upon a succeeding generation.

“Mr. Montgomery is one of the most musical and melancholy fine gentlemen we have lately descried on the lower

slopes of Parnassus. He is very weakly, very finical, and very affected. His affectations, too, are the most usual, and the most offensive of those that are commonly met with in the species to which he belongs. They are affectations of extreme tenderness and delicacy, and of great energy and enthusiasm. Whenever he does not whine he must rant. The scanty stream of his genius is never allowed to steal quietly along its channel, but it is either poured out in melancholy tears, or thrown up to heaven in all the frothy magnificence of tiny jets and artificial commotions."

The caustic raillery of the Edinburgh, though often whetted against real merit and true genius, did, nevertheless, a wholesome work for literature. Slow often in its discernments, overbearing in its temper, and rude in its onslaughts, it provoked careful study, a more vigorous tone, and higher finish among the writers of that day. Real ability it could crowd, but not crush; and the lessons taught by its flagellations were sometimes those which laid the foundations for successful authorship and permanent fame.

Montgomery winced before its verdict.

"The Edinburgh Review has, indeed, made me miserable beyond anything that the malice or the tyranny of man had been able to inflict on my sensibility, or on my pride before," he writes to Parken. "All that I suffered from political persecution and personal animosity in the former part of my life, seemed manly and generous opposition in comparison with the cowardly, yet audacious malignity of this critic, who took advantage of the eminence on which he was placed, beyond the reach of retaliation, to curse me like Shimei. However, be it as it may, and much as I have suffered from it both in health and mind, I would rather be the object than the author of such outrageous abuse. Your letter found me in the depth of despondency, in which that

critique, and another, in reality, far more formidable event, which was made known to me on the same day, had plunged me. A rival newspaper was announced in Sheffield, and I foreboded little less than utter ruin to mine from my knowledge of the persons concerned in it. In that situation of mind, in the very week in which I was thus assailed, both in fame and fortune, by unmerciful and interested men, I wrote, from the binding pledge which I had given you, the remarks on Walter Scott's last poems. I scarcely recollect what I said of them, for I have never yet ventured to revise my rough copies, and during the three or four days in which I composed them, by stratagem as it were — stealing a moment or a minute at a time, as I could snatch them from the gloom of my mind, and the distraction of my thoughts. This I know well, that, racked and broken as I was myself on the wheel of the Scotch inquisitors, I showed all the mercy that my conscience would permit towards him. I did him all the justice that I could, though I could not help feeling some of the weakness and wickedness of envy towards him, as he had been the favorite, and, I understand, the associate of my butchers; none of that envy, however, I hope is betrayed in my review. I tried with all my might to hide the cloven foot; if I have shown it, chop it off, for I would rather limp on a wooden leg than be seen dancing with it. When your letter came, as I said before, I was very unhappy; it was like a rainbow to my hopes, which had sickened in the deferred expectation of hearing from you soon after the receipt of my review of Scott's 'Ballads.' Since that time I have been slowly recovering my composure. The poison-tree of Edinburgh has not killed me this time with its pestilential influence, nor shall I be immediately reduced to beggary by my rival newsmonger."

Ah, the rubs and chances of fortune. "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." We are glad to see the poet has stuff in him not easily put down. A frost has indeed come upon his "blushing honors," but not a killing one.

"I thank you," he says, to a friend, "for your consolations on my escape, with barely my life in my hand, from the tomahawks of the northern banditti. I yet feel the venom on my cheek — this is downright pride, I know. If I had been a thousandth part as humble in heart as I pretend to be, I should scarcely have felt the insect — at least it would have been as little as the injury, which I trust has not been very great.

"If I am getting neither fame or money, I have all the plague without the profit of them, for literary and pecuniary engagements continually press and even harass me. I have hardly drawn one peaceful breath to-day; and three proofs are now waiting at my elbow. I cannot go to Manchester these — months! — I won't say how many.

"On Monday last, proposals were issued for publishing a new newspaper in Sheffield, by a person who formerly was in my office nearly nine years. My very bread and water are now precarious, and, unless I wrestle hard to keep them, the staff and the cup of life will be snatched from me by one who founds his expectations of success principally, I am convinced, on my unpopularity and imbecility. This is dreadfully humiliating: I have been drowning, these twelve years, and just when I imagined I was getting my head above water, comes a hand and plunges me into the deep again! The other misery that I fell into on the same day, is perhaps yet more mortifying; I received the Edinburgh review of my poems."

A fair picture of an author and editor behind the scenes.

Let nobody envy him, or ignorantly suppose, from the well-filled and easily read columns which issue from his work-shop, that his life is made "to run ever upon even ground."

Another criticism of "The Edinburgh," a few months later, wounding as deeply, was less passively endured. The avenging pen of Byron came to the rescue of suffering and smarting authorship; and his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" turned its weapons back upon itself with scathing power. Never was returned a smarter blow; never boxer had a more motley or applauding ring.

The Wanderer of Switzerland came over the water. Perhaps the same packet brought the weird "Thalaba," the last new novel of "The Great Unknown," as Scott incog. was then called, a song from Moore, and perhaps the famous sermon of Dr. Buchanan preached at Bristol, and entitled, "Star in East," which so kindled the fire of missionary zeal in the New England heart.

A stranger, dating from "Rome, State of New York," wrote to him:—"Perhaps a complimentary letter from the banks of the Mohawk is a novelty in England; yet as I am one of your many admirers in these distant forests, I beg leave to address you, whom I am sure it will not displease to be told that tears are shed in these wilds at the pathetic, soul-snbduing songs of the unfortunate 'Wanderer.' The little village in which I reside is not far removed from such savage scenes as you have described:

" 'Realms of mountains, dark with woods,

In Columbia's bosom lie: . . .

There, in glens and caverns rude,

Silent since the world began,

Dwells the virgin Solitude,

Unbetrayed by faithless man.'

The Wanderer of Switzerland has, indeed, an unparalleled popularity in this country: three editions are nearly exhausted in the northern, and I know not what quantity have been printed in the southern States. It is in the hand of every person who has any pretension to taste."

And as an evidence that the predictions of the "northern banditti" were not always made good by time, twenty years after its first appearance twelve thousand copies had been sold, netting four thousand dollars cash profits to its author, and its seventh edition was just then advertised by the publishers Longman & Co.

Parken having engaged Montgomery for the *Eclectic*, he thus writes the editor, enclosing a criticism upon the shameless productions of Thomas Little, the well known soubriquet of Moore:—

"Sheffield, September, 1, 1806.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have taken the earliest opportunity to return Thomas Moore's poems, with as *few* remarks as I could possibly make on them, though you will probably think them too many; but if you knew how much I have curtailed even what I had written, and how much more I have omitted to write at all, which occurred to my mind, and begged hard for admission as evidence against him, you would give me great credit for forbearance. However, your discretion must determine how far this article must be further abridged. It has been the most difficult task which you have yet set me, for as I was restricted, and very justly too, from making extracts, I was obliged to confine myself to very general remarks, and to be as guarded as possible in the expression of them, not to *provoke* evil imaginations, while I was endeavoring to *repress* them. The subject is

so abominable that it cannot be touched without defilement : but it *must be touched* ; and this shameless publication cannot be slightly passed over by you (‘ Eclectic’ Reviewers), as the defenders of that revelation which requires purity of heart and holiness in all manner of conversation. Besides, the work is of uncommon genius ; this cannot be denied ; nay, it must be *conceded*, lest the world should say you have not the honesty ‘ to give the devil his due.’ Under these considerations, I can only assure you that I have done my best — that is my worst — to condemn this profligate volume according to the strictest justice, which would neither ask nor give one grain of allowance, for in this cause I felt it my duty neither to take nor grant any quarter. I therefore endeavored to admit the full merit of the author’s talents, while I did not spare one hair of his demerits as a libertine in principle, and a deliberate seducer in practice. I am so exceedingly depressed in spirit to-day, that I can hardly think straightforward, much less write clearly.

“ I am, very truly, your obliged friend and servant,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.”

The January number of the Eclectic contained Montgomery’s critique on Wordsworth’s “ Lyrical Ballads,” &c.,* concerning which he had thus written to the editor three months previously :—

“ I am almost sure that you and I differ very widely in our opinions concerning Wordsworth’s talents, and perhaps more concerning his performances. My free, sincere, and utterly unbiassed sentiments I send you, not at all dreading your displeasure, because I hold a poet’s merits in higher estimation than you do. I know that

* Eclectic Review, vol. iv., p. 35.

when you engage me to review any work, it is my own judgment that you require me to exercise, and you do not expect that it shall always be in consonance with yours. I feel exceeding great reluctance to censure the works of a man of high and noble genius, however unworthy of him, because I am aware that the vivid imagination of poets, which I doubt not is always accompanied with equal self-complacency, often seduces them into errors which they know not to be such, but mistake them for excellencies of the purest order, when they are nothing but delirious wanderings from truth and nature. Yet it is hard to punish them for such follies, as if they had been guilty of crimes; lenity is not the character of any existing Review, nor are any of our periodical critics too lavish of praise. I hope that your readers will find as much rigor of censure in this article as will reconcile them to the warmth of commendation which I have most honestly and heartily bestowed on Wordsworth's undeniable merits. The cry is up; and it is the fashion to yelp him down. I belong not to the pack, nor will I wag my tongue or my tail, on any occasion, to please the multitude. I am conscious of no personal partiality to prejudice me in favor of Wordsworth. I am sure the poetry of two men cannot differ much more widely than his does from mine. I hate his baldness and vulgarity of phrase, and I doubt not he equally detests the splendor and foppery of mine; but I feel the pulse of poetry beating through every vein of thought in all his compositions, even in his most pitiful, puerile, and affected pieces. To *you* I need not add that his frigid mention of my name in his first note has not influenced me to speak more favorably of him than I otherwise would have done. It is a proud and almost contemptuous notice which he has taken of me and my

‘Daisy’ (I won’t change *mine* for his *three daisies*), and was more calculated to mortify and provoke a jealous temper, than to soothe and disarm one who had the power and the opportunity to humble a rival in the eye of the public. No! I am persuaded in my own mind, that I have done him justice to the best of my knowledge. I only regret that you will probably derive less satisfaction from the perusal of this essay than you might have done had our opinions been in perfect harmony. You must not be alarmed at the apparent length; for, though the first four pages are closely written, the following ones are loose, and the whole will make no more, I believe, than eight of yours at the most. I confess that I tore myself from poetry to criticism, on this occasion, with excessive reluctance. My mind was so alive with images and sentiments connected with my West Indian poem, that I did violence to my most favorite feelings to undertake this review. Nobody but you, and my own binding promise, could have moved me.”

To his friend Parken he writes, October 1, 1806 :

“Take the worst news I have to tell you. I have not written a line about Wool’s Warton, but indeed I will do my very best to send you the article in ten days, so that, instead of Monday next, do not expect it before Monday se’nnight. If you can forgive this, read forward; if not, throw this letter into the fire, and write me as scolding an answer as you can, and take care that it be charged with treble postage; I will not lose it at the post-office, if it be an angry one, and be less than three full sheets. Now I hold you at defiance; you will cool before you have written one page of hard words against so poor an offender as I am, and the moment you cool, I shall be pardoned, and received into more gracious favor than ever. Now, as I

see you are a much more reasonable being than you were a dozen lines ago, hear my apology, — may you never feel it! During the whole of the last month I have been sinking in despondency, till I have hardly had the spirit to languish through my ordinary drudgery of business, and much less to listen to Wool's dull narrative and stupid criticism, which are both so wretchedly neutral, that they can no more provoke than they can delight me; and, unless I am in a rapture or in a rage, I can find neither thoughts nor language to employ for or against an author. I do not intend to tell the public how very humbly I think of this huge quarto, which is as flat and as unmeaning to me as a grave-stone with no other inscription than, 'Here lies Joseph Warton, D.D.'

"I cannot engage to furnish you with any remarks on this work in less time than I have named, because I have to go into Derbyshire at the beginning of next week, which will take me away for several days. But I will endeavor to make you amends in the course of the month by sending you a few pages on the 'Life of Colonel Hutchinson,' which fell like a judgment upon me this afternoon for not having despatched Warton sooner: I never received a parcel before from you that was only half welcome; but this was indeed so, because it reminded me of my transgression, and inflicted a new penance on me, at a time when I am very ill qualified to bear any of 'the miseries of human life.' I will send you one of my newspapers by post to-morrow. You will find on the last page of it a few most melancholy stanzas, breathed, or rather *groaned* out (in the language of Timothy Testy, — that is, *you*, when you read this letter, — and Samuel Sensitive, — that is, *me*, while I am writing it) in the bitterness almost of despair, and which have more truth than poetry in them.

There are some subjects on which my mind is continually rolling, that forbid me ever to hope for peace on earth, because I am tempted in my gloomy fits to think that I can never find rest for my soul even in the consolations of the gospel, for I can never forget its threatenings: even on Mount Calvary I hear the thunders of Sinai. But I will not wound your heart on this tremendous theme. By the by, have you seen the Critical Review of August? It praises my little volume most unmercifully; but it has found out that I am a Jacobin in politics, and a fanatic in religion. As for the first accusation, I know how to despise it; and for the second, the reproach of the Cross, would to God that I were worthy of it!—I am glad you think highly of ‘Home.’ You are right respecting the disposition to depreciate the merits of living poets. I don’t choose to refer to my volume here, but for that very reason, ought not the Eclectic Review to set an example of independent judgment, and boldly venture to praise living merit, and to *lead* public opinion, not to *sneak after it*, as most of our reviewers do; who wait to hear what the world has to say about any new author, in whom they *suspect* there may be merit, though they dare not declare it, at the peril of all their critical reputation, till everybody else has acknowledged it. My observations on ‘Home’ were written without seeing a remark of anybody else’s upon it, and without being acquainted with a human being but myself who had read it. This, my dear sir, you may rely upon, that I shall always write *my* own judgment, whether it be worth your adoption or no; but I shall be always subject to your curtailments, nay even your utter rejection, when you totally disapprove, so long as I can have confidence in the unbiassed independence of *your* own judgment; for I never will nor can submit to

write to the prejudices or the private interests of any party whatever. Your kind information respecting the success of my critique on Dermody gives me a little encouragement ; but pray hide my name in the most secret part of your breast, where you conceal your best deeds from every human eye. I have scribbled this as hastily as possible, to put you in and out of pain respecting Wool's Warton."

Montgomery has just received from London the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," and "Marmion."

"Walter Scott is an admirable writer," he says, "is a poet *sui generis* ; but, whenever he steps on modern ground, he is only one of the weakest of us ; in his magic circle he is inimitable — out of it, a gentleman who writes with ease."

Scott, at this time, was connected with the Edinburgh Review, and made generous overtures to enlist Southey in its service. Southey declined. "The objections which weigh with me against bearing any part in this journal are these," he replies ; "I have scarcely an opinion in common with it upon any subject. My feelings are still less in unison with Jeffrey than my opinions. On subjects of moral and political importance, no man is more apt to speak in the very gall of bitterness than I am, and this habit is likely to go with me to the grave ; but that sort of bitterness in which he indulges, which tends directly to wound a man in his feelings, and injure him in his fame and fortune (Montgomery is a case in point) appears to me utterly inexcusable. The emolument to be derived from writing at ten guineas a sheet, Scotch measure, instead of seven pounds, annual, would be considerable ; the pecuniary advantage, resulting from the different manner in which my future works would be handled, still more so.

But my moral feelings must not be compromised. To Jeffrey, as an individual, I shall ever be ready to show every kind of individual courtesy; but of Judge Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review I must ever think and speak as of a bad politician, a worse moralist, and a critic, in matters of taste, equally incompetent and unjust."

Ebenezer Elliott, just shaking his shaggy locks, and kindling at "man's inhumanity to man," writes to the Bard of Keswick for counsel how to bring his "first fruits" before the public. We hope his reply will not be considered an interloper in our pages. It may serve to answer similar questions not unfrequently put in our time. "A recommendation to the booksellers to look at a manuscript is of no use whatever," writes Southey to the young Corn-law Rhymer. "In the way of business they glance at everything which is offered them, and no persons know better what is likely to answer their purpose. Poetry is the worst article in the market: out of fifty volumes, which may be published in the course of a year, not five pay the expense of publication; and this is a piece of knowledge which authors in general purchase dearly, for, in most cases, these volumes are printed at their own risk.

"From the specimen of your productions now in my writing-desk, I have no doubt you possess the feeling of a poet, and may distinguish yourself; but I am sure premature publication would eventually discourage you. You have an example in Kirke White; his 'Clifton Green' sold only to the extent of the subscriptions he obtained for it; and the treatment which it experienced drove him, by his own account, almost to madness. My advice to you is, to go on improving yourself, without hazarding anything; you cannot practice without improvement. Feel your way before the public, as Montgomery did. He sent his

verses to the newspapers, and, when they were copied from one to another, it was a sure sign they had succeeded. He then communicated them, as they were copied from the papers, to the Poetical Register; the Reviews selected them for praise; and thus, when he published them in a collected form, he did nothing more than claim, in his own character, the praise which had been bestowed upon him under a fictitious name. Try the newspapers; send what you think one of your best short poems to the Courier or Globe. If it is inserted, send others, with any imaginary signature. If they please nobody, and nobody notices them with praise, nobody will with censure, and you will escape all criticism. If, on the contrary, they attract attention, the editor will be glad to pay you for more — and they still remain your property, to be collected and reprinted in whatever manner you may think best hereafter."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS — LOTTERIES — VISIT TO LONDON — SLAVE-TRADE — “THE WEST INDIES” — “THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD” — VISIT FROM HIS BROTHER ROBERT — HART’S-HEAD — THE POET’S HOME — PARKEN’S MATRIMONIAL ADVICE — CRITICISMS — LETTERS FROM SOUTHEY AND ROSCOE.

IF the author and the editor had his trials, they are tempered and more easily borne by seeking out and sympathizing with those who carried heavier burdens than his own.

The sufferings of a species of child labor,—chimney-sweeping,—hardly known to the children of the present day, except perhaps through a stray old copy of “London Cries,” are enlisting the humane exertions of Montgomery and Mr. Roberts.

London was already bestirring herself against the inhumanities of this villainous trade, “which,” says one, “cannot be taught without cruelty, learnt without suffering, or practised without peril to the lives and limbs of the numberless poor children engaged in it.”

In the summer of 1807, an association was formed in Sheffield for bettering their condition, and for devising more suitable machines for chimney-cleaning, than the “bones and muscles of infants.”

An exponent of this interest appeared in the shape of a

dinner given on Easter Monday to these children, which, annually repeated, served to keep alive in the public mind the sympathy already awakened in their behalf.

It was a favorite anniversary of the poet, who never failed to aid in furnishing the table from his pockets, and, if possible, with his presence; while the *Iris* perseveringly did its part to bring the odium of public sentiment against this apprenticeship, with reference to its entire extinction by an act of Parliament.

Another craft, also, began to arrest the serious attention of Montgomery, whose gainfulness to himself does not seem to have closed his eyes to its moral vitiations.

On establishing the *Iris*, in 1794, at the old stand of the Register, the young editor became the natural inheritor of its time-honored customs. One of these was the sale of lottery tickets; his sheet, of course, in common with all other papers of the realm, inserting lottery advertisements.

This sale was continued at the Hart's-head for several years; and a £20,000 prize having once been drawn through this office, it acquired the unenviable notoriety of "the lucky office," which brought an extraordinary patronage to its doors.

"Familiarity with some kinds of sin deadens the consciousness of it; but this was not my case in reference to the state lottery," says the clear-sighted editor; "it was familiarity with it which convinced me that I was dealing in deceptive wares. I was occasionally surprised at the different kinds of money brought to me by persons of the humbler class—hoarded guineas, old crowns, half-crowns, and fine impressions of smaller silver coins, at a time when bank-paper, Spanish dollars, and tokens of inferior standard, issued by private individuals and companies, formed a kind of mob-currency throughout the realm. These were ven-

tured 'for the sake of luck,' in many instances by poor women, who had inherited them from their parents, received them as birth or wedding-day gifts, saved them for their children's thrift-pots, or laid them up against a rainy day or sickness. With these they came to buy *hope*, and I sold them *disappointment* ! It was this thought, passing through my mind like a flash of lightning, and leaving an indelible impression there, which decided a long-meditated, but often procrastinated purpose ; and I said to myself at length, 'I will give up this traffic of delusion.' I did so, and from that moment never sold another share."

In 1809, Montgomery paid a visit to London, where for the first time, after a correspondence of two years, he met Parken. Lucy Aikin and her father invited him to the hospitalities of Stoke Newington, and Mrs. Barbauld, dwelling on the same green, came to bid him welcome.

At Woolwich, eight miles east of London, down the Thames, his younger brother Robert lived, a flourishing grocer, with wife and children. Here, also, Dr. Olinthus Gregory resided, the intimate friend of Robert Hall, best known in this country through his "Evidences of Christianity." Montgomery was invited to his house, and a cordial regard, with an occasional correspondence, seems to have sprung up between them.

To Merton, a village in Surrey, seven miles south-west of the metropolis, he accompanied Parken, on a visit to Basil Montague, whose wife was an early friend. Here, in a pleasant gathering of congenial spirits, he met the famous Dr. Parr, some of whose habits one had need be very much his friend, indeed, to pardon and to bear with :—smoking, for instance, in the drawing-room ; for no sooner was he seated in the elegant apartment than his pipe was

brought, and fair hands were in requisition with tobacco and fire. As the smoke curled around the canonicals of the Doctor, "and is Dr. Parr," pertinently mused Montgomery to himself, "really so *great a man*, that it is immaterial whoever else be annoyed, so that his comfort is secured? Or is he so *little a man*, that he cannot, even under such circumstances as these, forego the usual indulgence of his fondness for smoking?"

Coleridge, now residing at Grasmere, was about issuing the "Friend," the first number of which appeared in June, 1809, and he thus bespeaks the interest of Montgomery:—

"DEAR SIR,

"In desiring a small packet of these prospectuses to be sent to you from Leeds, I have presumed less on myself than on our common friend, Mrs. Montague; but, believe me, by more than by either I have been encouraged by my love and admiration of your works, and my unfeigned affectionate esteem of what I have been so often and so eloquently told by Mrs. M. of your life and character. Conscious how very glad I should be to serve you in anything, I apply with less discomfort to you in behalf of my own concerns. What I wish is simply to have the prospectuses placed and disposed among such places and persons as may bring the work to the notice of those whose moral and intellectual habits may render them desirous to become subscribers. I know your avocations, and dare not therefore ask you for an occasional contribution. I have received promises of support from some respectable writers, and, for my own part, am prepared to play off my whole power of acquirements, such as they are, in this work, as from the main pipe of the fountain.

"If choice or chance should lead you this way, you will

find both here and at Greta Hall, Keswick, house-room and heart-room; for I can add Robert Southey's and William Wordsworth's names to my own, when I declare myself with affectionate respect,

“Dear sir, yours sincerely,

“S. T. COLERIDGE.”

Another poem is already on the stocks, on a subject having the hearty co-operation of his principles and affections. Montgomery was a thorough abolitionist—a word less startling to British ears than to ours, perhaps.

Referring to the rejection of a “Bill for the Gradual Abolition of Negro Slavery” by the House of Commons, a few years before, the *Iris* thus unmistakably shows its colors:—

“There is a *fashion in feeling*. This infamous traffic in the unmarketable commodity of God's creatures—for the Almighty never alienated a tittle of his right in a single human being, and who shall dare to dispossess him of it?—we say this infamous traffic, which once excited almost universal and unqualified abhorrence in this country, seems now to have softened into a common-place subject, which we can contemplate with as much composure as the diviners of old could pore over the palpitating entrails of animals ripped open to discover the secrets of futurity. The plagues of Egypt were the first signal and exemplary punishment inflicted by the violated majesty of heaven on slave-traders in the infancy of the world. The plagues of St. Domingo are only the beginning of sorrows in the West Indies—that grave of Europe and Africa!—where slaves and their tyrants indiscriminately, rapidly, and prematurely descend to the dust; where the snow of age is almost as rarely seen on the head of man as the snow of winter on the tops of the mountains.”

“We strongly recommend,” he said, in the *Iris* of September, 1805, “the perusal of an article on our last page on the slave-trade. The atrocities there recorded are not the ghosts of antiquated murders that have mouldered out of memory. This blood that cries for vengeance has not lost its voice,—it has not lost its warmth! It boils round the heart, it burns through the veins, while the reader alternately trembles with anger and melts with compassion at the crimes and the woes of his fellow-creatures. Fellow-creatures! Are slaves and slave-dealers our fellow-creatures? To what wickedness, to what misery are we akin! No;—the sufferer is only our brother; his lordly oppressor denies consanguinity with the slave; be it so, for thereby he bastardizes himself; the negro is assuredly related to *all the rest* of the human race.”

The great conflict in England between the advocates of the slave-trade and the demands of Christian civilization is too well known to need recapitulation here. Headed by Wilberforce, the anti-slavery men of that day fought valiantly. Apathy, discouragement, defeat, desertion, never damped them; often routed, they as often renewed the charge. The cause indeed contained within itself the very elements of a conquering strength,—humanity and justice, the first principles of gospel legislation, and the Christian growth—and it *must prevail*. And no array of names, no perverted use of Scripture, no affluence of resources, no constitutional entrenchments, no timid alarm-cries, can long save slavery or the slave-trade in any country from its final doom. The march of Christian civilization is on its track, to displace its rude labors and brute forces, by the discerning industry and moral sinew of free-born men and women.

British pluck did prevail, and on the 25th of March,

1807, the royal assent was given to an act passed by Parliament for the abolishing of British trading in human beings.

"The bill has passed and become a law," is the exultant cry of the *Iris*. "Thus hath the glorious offspring of humanity, which for seventeen years has been passing through a 'burning fiery furnace,' heated into sevenfold fury by the worshippers of the 'golden image' set up by a greater than Nebuchadnezzar — by 'Mammon' in the West Indies; — thus, we say, has this persecuted child of benevolence come out perfect and pure from the fire; for the angel of mercy, who was seen walking with it in the flames, prevented them from kindling upon it; and in heaven's own appointed time, he has brought it forth unconsumed and uninjured, untainted and untouched."

Accordingly he was prepared to give a cordial response to proposals soon after made to him. "Received a letter," he says, "from Mr. Bowyer, of Pall-Mall (to whom I was an entire stranger), announcing that he had projected a splendid memorial of the recent triumph of justice and humanity, in the abolition of the slave-trade by an act of the British legislature, in a series of pictures, representing the past sufferings and the anticipated blessings of the long-wronged and late-righted Africans, both in their own land and in the West Indies. The engravings from these designs were to be accompanied by a poem illustrative of the subject. This he very courteously requested me to contribute. Soon elated, as soon depressed, I eagerly, yet tremblingly, undertook the commission; for I could not help doubting the wisdom of Mr. Bowyer's choice of a poet after the judgment which had been passed upon my recent performances by the critical infallibilities of my own country." The subject, however, his own soul was penetrated

with, and immediately he took up his pen. The task was soon completed. "Concerning my slave-trade poem," we find him writing to Aston, "I have only to tell you, that I heard a few days ago from Bowyer, who complains bitterly of ungrateful and mercenary engravers, who have both his plates and him in their hands, and he can neither extricate the one nor the other: so that his work may be three months—or, if you like a round number better, six months—before it makes its appearance. This is very distressing for a poet, impatient to be born in a new shape; for if a poet lives in his works when he is dead, he lives much more in them while he is alive: in fact, he undergoes a regular metempsychosis from one form to another, through every piece that he writes; the last being always the best in his esteem, as each body which the soul inhabits in the course of transmigration, whether it be an elephant or an ass, is in turn the dearest. . . . Of my visit to London I have talked and written so much that I am quite weary of it; and if I were to attempt to entertain you with any account of it, I should be too dull to be endured. I saw Dr. Aikin, Mrs. Barbauld, Robert Bloomfield, and ought to have seen Thomas Campbell, but illness prevented him from meeting me according to the invitation of a common friend, and he sent an apology as flattering, but not half so welcome, as his company would have been. I was introduced to so many other great and middling, and good and better sort of men, that I cannot now recollect half of those I saw, and of those that saw me, not the thousandth part—for in London one seems to live in the mouth of a bee-hive, where those that are crowding in and those that are pressing out pass over or under one another, on this side or that, just as there may be room or opportunity. . . . This is London."

The letters of a new correspondent we find now on his table, William Roscoe, of Liverpool. One from him, at this date, so fully answers our own notions of a letter, that we give a paragraph of it for the benefit of our friends:—

“There is a stupid old rule, that a man should not talk about himself; but I should be glad to know on what subject he can talk of which he ought to know so much; and I am sure that, whatever may be the case when he makes his appearance before the public, yet in the intercourse of private friendship the more he talks about himself the better. On this account, I always prefer those letters of a friend which contain neither articles of intelligence nor abstract dissertations. The head speaketh to the head, and the heart to the heart; and I think it a sin to convert a letter into either a gazette or a sermon. Allow me, therefore, to say, that in you I have met with a correspondent according to my own mind, who writes as he thinks, and forgets, for a moment, that there are other persons in the world besides his friend and himself. If, whenever you find yourself disposed towards it, you will take up your pen, and give your thoughts freely as they rise, you may rest assured that I shall not only receive them with real pleasure, but endeavor to make you the best return in my power.”

We take an extract from Montgomery's reply, frank and free as the poet could be:—

“When I wrote last I was so tired out with Mr. Bowyer's procrastination in bringing forward his pompous volume on the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, that I had determined to put off the small edition of my poems on that subject *sine die*; and, instead of bringing it out as a rider to Mr. Bowyer's book, I meant to publish the piece

which I mentioned in my last as having occupied, and indeed almost exhausted, my mind, during the latter half of last year. The instant I have finished a new poem I wish all the world to see it; in the joy of its birth I forget all the anguish it cost me, and only anticipate the renown it shall bring me for ages to come! When I wrote last I was in my first love with this fairest offspring of my imagination, and which had given more pain than any of its elder brethren. I therefore wrote too passionately concerning it, and have probably excited a hope in your breast of merit which you can never meet with in any work of mine. Be this as it may, my own transports soon subsided, and yielded to fears, of such foreboding and appalling import, that my heart sunk under them; and though I had arranged with Messrs. Longman for the early appearance of this paragon of poetry, I retreated, even after the manuscript was sent to London. I have breathed more freely ever since, though the recollection how nearly my rashness had brought my reputation to a stake at which it would have inevitably been burnt to ashes, and scattered on the winds, makes me shudder, even in the conscious security of being still in manuscript, out of which I shall certainly not creep for ten or twelve months to come. Therefore, with all its sins upon its head (which my present terrors may, after all, magnify as much beyond the truth, as my former fondness exalted its merits), you shall see it. I therefore write now to request you to inform me, at your own convenience, how I may send the copy to you to secure its safe delivery. The MS. will be in the hands either of my bookseller, or some friend in London, till the latter end of March. As I have neither room nor time at present to say more concerning it, I shall defer any hints that may be necessary to preju-

dice you in its favor, before you begin the perusal of this wild offspring of my muse. I won't attempt to bias your judgment, but I *will* try to bribe your heart before you take the critic's chair. With respectful remembrance to all your family,

"I am truly, your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"William Roscoe, Esq., Allerton Hall, near Liverpool."

Bowyer's work was at last issued. Its long delay, the failure of many promised contributions, and its high price, operated unfavorably on the sale, which was comparatively limited.

Montgomery's portion of it was afterwards issued, with a few shorter poems, in a small volume, in the spring of 1810; and in this form *The West Indies* became extensively read.

Embodying, as it did, the national sympathies of a people in its unanimous verdict against a national sin, it could hardly fail of being eloquent. The very subject disarmed criticism, and won for it a place in every English home.

The Negro deeming

—— "his own land of every land the pride,
Beloved of heaven o'er all the world beside;
His home the spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest;"

Africa,

"Basking in all the splendors of a solar zone;"

the Trade, which had depopulated her, and

—— "o'er the Atlantic waves
For guilty ages rolled the tide of slaves:
A tide that knew no fall, no turn, no rest,
Constant as day and night from east to west;

Still widening, deepening, swelling in its course
With boundless ruin and resistless force ;"

the Champions who stood

"In this wide breach of violated laws ;"

"When Pitt, supreme among the senate, rose,
The Negro's friend among the Negro's foes ;

"When Fox, all eloquent for freedom, stood,
With speech resistless as the voice of blood ;

"With Wilberforce, the minister of grace,
The new Las Casas of a ruined race ;"

Britannia, confessing the nation's claim, and turning to her dusky sister,

" ' All hail ! ' exclaimed the empress of the sea,
 ' Thy chains are broken, Africa, be free ; "

all form a vivid panorama of some of the foulest and noblest doings in the chronicles of a Christian nation.

"The subject, which had become antiquated by frequent, minute, and disgusting exposure, afforded no opportunity to awaken, suspend, and delight curiosity, by a subtle and surprising development of plot," says the author, in a brief preface ; a defect which, however it may otherwise be accounted for in the present case, existed in the poet himself, for Montgomery possessed none of the dramatic force of "sweet surprises."

"That trade is at length abolished. May its memory be immortal, that henceforth it may be known only *by* its memory !" are his closing words—an ejaculation whose significance has not altogether passed away.

Another poem, just completed, he sent to Mr. Roscoe for criticism. On its return, he thus delightfully opens his heart to his critic:—

“Sheffield, July 23, 1810.

“DEAR SIR,

“The *World before the Flood* arrived safely this morning. Once more I thank you for your kind and valuable strictures upon it, of which I hope to profit some time or other, but when I know not. I must lie fallow a little longer; this last crop has exhausted me. Besides, I am not so impatient now to be immortal at once as I was when I was at school, and confidently hoped to transcend all my poetical forerunners in every species of excellence. I will therefore quietly wait a little longer to watch the progress of my *West Indies*, and other smaller poems, just published, which I have seen for the first time in their diminutive form to-day. I enclose two copies, thinking, from your exceedingly friendly disposition towards my *provincial* muse, that you will be pleased to see her new offspring as early as possible. After all, there really is a gratification (I don't care whether it be a rational one or no) in seeing anything *quite new*, and before every vulgar eye has gazed on it, or, which is more likely in the present instance, has *overlooked* it. Some of these little pieces you may recollect having read in the Athenæum. Others have never appeared in print, and have all their dew and fragrancy about them now, in the very dawn of their day,—a little day perhaps; but a few eyes *will* look with delight upon them, before the sun withers, or the wind scatters, or the hand of oblivion plucks them, and casts them away for ever. Yet *who* would rear flowers of poesy for such a fate? Thousands *do* it, but does *one* intend it? I could not write at

all, if there were not in my breast a wish, so earnest and so strong, that I often mistake it for a hope after immortality. This dear, delightful self-delusion soothes me under every discouragement, and cheers me under every neglect! Yet what is it? I know not; and if I *did* know, the charm might be broken: I might desire it no longer. Nothing within our reach appears so precious as that which is just beyond our reach, but which we may yet touch, and by touching only prove that we cannot grasp it, like a ball suspended by a single hair. I believe I understand this figure, probably you do not; I have no time to explain it, for which I am glad, lest I should make nonsense of it."

A visit from his brother Robert, reviving "the sweet sense of kindred" in his bosom, seems to have afforded the poet and editor a pleasing relaxation from the tasks of the quill.

"Your visit," he writes him, on his return, "I assure you has drawn yet closer the bonds of brotherly kindness that always united my heart to yours; but which, from the long and wide separation that circumstances beyond our power have made between us, has not been so renewed and strengthened from time to time as it would have been, had we lived nearer to one another. But the farther we have been removed, I have found the dearer we were when we met; and I trust that, in future, if we are spared a few years longer, we shall oftener see each other's face, and feel each other's love expressed in those sweet words and deeds which can neither be written nor performed at a distance, and which the heart acknowledges with secret gratitude and delight."

Another letter, written a few months after, reveals the yearnings of a *Christian* brother's heart:—

“Sheffield, December 13, 1811.

“MY DEAR ROBERT,

. . . “Many, many times have I lived over again in my thoughts the days of your last visit to Sheffield, during which I enjoyed more of your company than I had done at any period during the last twenty years, and, of consequence, I had more opportunity of looking into your heart, and observing its most secret and sacred emotions; not that I was a spy upon my brother’s conduct, or laid a single snare to entrap him in his speech. No; I had no occasion to employ craft or stratagem of any kind to discover all that I wished to know, and all that I had a right to know, of your feelings, sentiments, and disposition. Whatever I found in you, my dear Robert, be assured that I loved and respected you more, the more I became acquainted with you. On my part, I can conscientiously declare that I endeavored to appear before you without any disguise, either in my conduct or my conversation; in sincerity and truth I wished to be that, and that only, in your esteem, which my heart testified I was in reality, and which, I trust, I shall ever remain, your affectionate brother, and your friend indeed. . . . Do write soon, and let me know fully and truly how you are; I am not afraid of your using deceit towards me on any other subject but this; I therefore charge you, as you love me, and more than this, as you love your family, that you always tell me candidly how you are affected in this most serious concern of the poor transitory life which you are leading in this vain world of trial and suffering, and danger and death. Here, too, let me entreat you to ‘remember in this your day the things that belong to your peace;’ and O may our Saviour never have cause to weep over you and me, as he once did over Jerusalem, and say that ‘those things’ which we rejected while

they were offered to us, are ‘for ever hidden from our eyes!’ The feelings, deep and awful, which this reflection has awakened, naturally lead me to mention my visit to Oebrook, about the middle of October. I met Ignatius and Agnes at Matlock, where they had been a short time for the benefit of the waters, poor Ignatius being very weak, as, indeed, you saw when you called on him on your return. He looked pale and thin, but in other respects little changed since I saw him six years before. He was languid, but there was a meekness, a heavenly-mindedness in his manner and in his looks, that rendered him inexpressibly interesting to me. Agnes, whom I then saw for the first time since we were children at Fulneck, appeared much healthier and stronger than I expected. We were soon brother and sister, you may be sure, and I was charmed with her in every point of view in which I saw her at Matlock and at Oebrook, as an affectionate helpmate to our dear infirm Ignatius, an excellent nurse both to him and John James, and a most worthy and accomplished woman. She is, in my esteem, a guardian angel, sent by the express command of heaven to minister to poor Ignatius; and I will add, he is worthy of her; a kinder, humbler, nobler heart than his surely never warmed a human breast. As for John James, he is an armful of roses, and his very first smile made me love him from my soul, but he did not make me forget Betsey, or Harriet — *my* Betsey and *my* Harriet, I ought to say; no, he only reminded me more and more of them. . .

“I am, very truly, your affectionate brother,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. Robert Montgomery, Woolwich.”

Parken also visited Sheffield. The duties of a host were

most heartily and royally fulfilled, nobody can doubt, yet the guest ungratefully suggests an improvement in the poet's quarters.

Let us look in. His study we might naturally seek first.

"In this room," says Montgomery, introducing us to it, "where some of my happiest pieces have been produced, those I mean which are most popular, all the prospect I have is a confined yard, where there are some miserable old walls and the backs of houses, which present to the eye neither beauty or variety, or anything to inspire a single thought, except about bricks, the corners of which have been chipped off by violence, or fretted away by the weather."

But should not a poet's surroundings be suggestive of all beautiful thoughts? "No," he answers; "as a general rule, whatever of poetry is to be derived from scenery, must be secured before we sit down to compose—the impressions must be made already, and the mind must be abstracted from surrounding objects. It will not do to be expatiating abroad in observation, when we should be at home in concentration of thought."

Sisterly affections are supplied by the three Miss Gales, and congenial society enough these must have been to occupy any barren gap in the poet's life. But Parken is not satisfied. Bachelordom finds no toleration with him. He is persuaded that Montgomery needs a dearer one, and delicately, but urgently, broaches the subject soon after his return to London. "It is," he proceeds, "much easier to write one's feelings than to speak them; and among the few subjects on which I could be happy to show you my whole heart, the most prominent is *yourself*. One of the topics, therefore, in which I am most interested is, you may be sure, that which *most* interests *you*. I presumed,

as far as I durst in your presence, but not quite so far as to express fully my conviction (derived from very sufficient sources) that your apprehensions of infelicity are totally unfounded; that any one who was really worthy of you, would consider it only too much happiness to be united and devoted to you as a friend and a nurse; and that such a union would infallibly relieve the greater part of those very infirmities, both mental and bodily, which appear to you such formidable impediments. Be advised, my dear friend; do not procrastinate: I still hope it is not too late, but that if you attempt you will succeed; and then I am confident you will thank me as long as you live. How I should rejoice next summer to see a third added to our friendship, and that third — a female!"

How the counsel was received we do not know; no change disturbed the accustomed quiet of Hartshead, and anon the poet courted the Muse. The *World before the Flood* occupies his pen. Its Sunday morning origin is thus related: "During the delay of the publication of *The West Indies*, and while in quest of a theme for a leading essay to form, with many minor pieces, a new volume, he happened one Sunday morning, before starting to his usual place of worship, to be meditating on the history of Enoch and his relation to the antediluvians, as recorded in the fifth chapter of the book of Genesis, which he was reading; at the same time a well-known passage in the eleventh book of 'Paradise Lost,' in which Milton applies the striking imagery connected with the Scripture account of the ascent of Elijah in a chariot of fire to the translation of Enoch, forcibly occurred to his recollection. This at once determined his choice."

In a few months the plan thus suddenly conceived was diligently wrought into a poem of five cantos. A copy

was sent to Parken, with a request, that after having read it himself, he would give it to Longman for immediate publication. Parken carefully did his part, and so much liked it, as, Montgomery tells us, "to think it *worth* mending, and capable of being *greatly* mended, because the author had not done justice either to himself or the theme in so contracted a compass. Wherefore, with a courage and candor not often hazarded by one friend towards another, in an affair of peculiar delicacy, where the most jealous of personal feelings must of necessity be wounded, how tenderly soever the sensitive operation may be performed, he addressed a brief but earnest letter to me, imploring permission to detain the manuscript a few days longer, before he consigned it to the booksellers for the press, and till the author himself had given further consideration to the subject, with the view of bringing out its latent capabilities more effectually than had been attempted in the draft, or rather in the sketch which had been sent to him."

The frank and sensitive poet confesses that for a moment the advice ruffled his feelings, and it took a five miles' walk to smooth them down. Air and exercise helped to good digestion, and he came back, "determined not to be outdone in magnanimity, but to return the friendship of his friend by unreservedly bowing to his judgment, and adopting his counsel."

Wishing to bespeak more extended criticism, and perhaps to test the soundness of Parken's criticism, he submitted the manuscript to four other literary friends, Dr. Aikin, Dr. Gregory, Mr. Roscoe, and Mr. Rees, a partner of Longman, the publisher. The result was a careful revision of the poem in reference to greater unity and copiousness.

Parken's letter on the use of fiction, in answer to the poet's scruples regarding the web of his poem, is not devoid of interest : —

“CLOISTERS, TEMPLE, June 15, 1811.

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

“The other subject of which I was to have written you by return of post was the doubt you seem to entertain of the morality of fiction. It chagrined and alarmed me a good deal, to think of your mind or your conscience being perplexed on a point of such vital importance to your present pursuits. A friend of mine, who is also a friend of Southey's, so far from admitting any such notion as yours, contends that poetry, considered *as fiction*, is the finest species of ethies ; and goes so far as to call religion the most perfect poetry, because it has all the glory of fiction, and all the reality of fact. He insists upon it that poetry, like the other fine arts, is chiefly beneficial, because it supplies nobler images, and a higher standard of excellence, to the imagination than nature can furnish to the senses ; and elevates man to the loftiest pitch he is capable of attaining, by pointing him to that which is beyond his reach. However this may be, I am sure there is no immorality inherent in fictions, as such, which *have no practical tendency contrary to fact*. I *hope* my metaphysics and morals are intelligible to you ; I *think* they are to myself. In your poem there is no intention to deceive : there is no probability that any person will be deceived ; and if the whole world *were* to be deceived, not a single feeling would be excited or a single action performed which would not be sanctioned by enlarged views of our nature, or which would be in the smallest degree detrimental to the happiness of a single individual. If I wanted

proofs, I would only cite the apologues and parables of Scripture, some of which, if not all, are unquestionably fictitious. The use of fiction in literature appears to me exactly analogous to the conception of quantities in mathematics, or, to come home to my own peculiar and favorite studies, to the statement of imaginary cases for the determination of points in law. Many cases may be imagined which probably never did occur in real life, but which might have occurred, may occur, and some time or other probably will. All the truth involved in the real case is equally involved in the imaginary one; and surely there is nothing very immoral or pernicious in getting instruction *before* an event actually takes place, which would be sound and salutary afterwards. If there is any objection to the use of fiction in connection with facts of sacred history, in a poetical work, it must rest upon the extraordinary power of fascination and illusion which the highest order of poetry possesses. The popular creed with respect to the fall of man, the war of the angels, and the character of Satan, is probably derived at least as much from 'Paradise Lost,' as from the book of Genesis or Revelation. Happily there is but little variance between them, and as to what there is, a moment's reflection detects the illusion, and the Bible is always at hand to dispel it. May your poem do as much harm as Milton's in this way, and as much good, by grafting religious facts and principles on the public mind! The palm shall then be enlivened with your bays, and you shall cast both at the feet of the Redeemer, shouting Hosanna!

"I am most affectionately yours,

"D. PARKEN."

Four cantos of the revised poem having been sent to

Parken, he read them to a circle of literary friends, one of whom soon after wrote to the author, that Southey expressed his regret at learning he had chosen the heroic couplet — the least adapted, he thought, for a long poem, and especially such a poem. Blank verse, without comparison, was recommended.

Montgomery immediately submitted a portion of the manuscript to Southey, whose heart-revealing letter in return cannot fail of interest.

“KESWICK, May 6th, 1811.

“MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

“Your *Death of Adam* is what it should be ; and the apparition at the close brings with it all the comfort, and light, and glory that is wanted. Eve’s departure is admirably conceived. I did not expect it, because I was chained too much as I went along to expect anything ; but the event follows so naturally, that it produced an effect like historical truth. I should never have objected to the couplet, if it had often been written as you write it — with that full and yet unwearying harmony, well varied, but never interrupted. There are but two expressions that struck me as blemishes : concerning the one, you will agree with me ; about the other, perhaps, you will not. The first is the epithet ‘unreturning,’ in the last line of the first paragraph : the other is ‘this congenial side.’ The direct reference to the rib is perfectly proper ; and yet I wish the word ‘breast’ had been used instead of ‘side.’

“No man who looks into his own heart when he is capable of understanding it, can doubt that there is a disease in human nature, for which the grace of God is the only remedy : with this belief, or rather with this *sense*, and this *conviction*, there can be no presumption in saying that

I regard the first chapter of Genesis not as an historical narration, but an allegorical veil for this mystery — a mystery that has been unconsciously acknowledged among mankind, because it has been universally felt. If I understood the story literally, then I should read the line in the feeling with which you have written it : but that the formation of Eve is the only part of this very beautiful narrative which has not the solemnity of the rest, is apparent from the numberless light allusions to which it has given rise, from men who had no irreverent thought or intention.

“I have passed through many changes of belief, as is likely to be the case with every man of ardent mind who is not early gifted with humility. Gibbon shook my belief in Christianity when I was a school-boy of seventeen. When I went to college it was in the height of the French Revolution — and I drank deeply of that cup. I had a friend there whose name you have seen in my poems — Edmund Seward, an admirable man in all things, whose only fault was that he was too humble ; for humble, even to a fault, he was. In his company my religious interests were strengthened. But to those who have any religious feeling, you need not be told how chilling and withering the lip-service of a university must be. Sick of the college, chapel, and church, we tried the meeting-house ; and there we were disgusted too. Seward left college meaning to take orders ; I, who had the same destination, became a deist after he left us, and turned my thoughts to the profession of physic. Godwin’s book fell into my hands : many of his doctrines appeared as monstrous to me then as they do now ; but I became enamored of a philosophical millennium. Coleridge came from Cambridge to visit a friend at Oxford on his way to

a journey in Wales. That friend was my bosom companion: Coleridge was brought to my rooms—and that meeting fixed the future fortunes of us both.

“Coleridge had at that time thought little of politics; in morals he was as loose as men at a university usually are: but he was a Unitarian. My morals were of the sternest stoicism: the same feeling which made me a poet kept me pure—before I had used Werther and Rousseau for Epictetus. Our meeting was mutually agreeable; I reformed his life, and he disposed me towards Christianity, by showing me that none of the arguments that had led me to renounce it were applicable against the Socinian scheme. He remained three or four weeks at Oxford, and we planned a Utopia of our own, to be founded in the wilds of America upon the basis of common property—each laboring for all—a Pantisocracy—a republic of Reason and Virtue.

“For this dream I gave up every other prospect. How painfully and slowly I was awakened from it, this is not the time to say; for my purpose is but to show you where I have been upon my pilgrim's progress, and how far I have advanced upon the way. I became a Socinian from the reasonableness of the scheme; and still more so because I was shocked by the consequences of irreligion, such as they were seen in my daily intercourse with sceptics, unbelievers, and atheists. I reasoned on it till I learnt and felt how vain it is to build up a religion wholly upon historical proofs. I learnt that religion could never be a living and quickening principle if we only assented to it as a mere act of the understanding. Something more was necessary—an operation of grace—a manifestation of the Spirit—an inward revelation—a recognition of revealed truth. This drew me towards Quakerism, yet with

too clear a perception of the errors and follies of the Quakers to be wholly in union with them. In what has all this ended you will ask? That I am still what in old times was called a *secker*—a sheep without a fold, but not without a shepherd; clinging to all that Christ has clearly taught, but shrinking from all attempts at defending, by articles of faith, those points which the gospels have left indefinite. I am of no visible church, but assuredly I feel myself in the communion of saints.

“Hence, perhaps it is, that wherever I find love and faith and devotement, there I am, so far, in communion. I look to those points which we hold in common, and overlook the accidents that accompany these in the individual. Not that I am indifferent to the differences of belief; on the contrary, no man has a stronger conviction of the fatal consequences which result from the corruptions of Christianity. You have seen what I have said of the Inquisition: you may find more of my feelings upon the subject in the eighth number of the ‘Quarterly,’ upon the Evangelical Sects, and in the first, upon the Baptist Mission in India.

“Vanderkemp’s history is in the first volume of the Transactions of the Missionary Society. I have both the works of Crantz, which you offer me; and also Laskiel. The first two volumes of the Moravian accounts I thought you might possibly have been able to procure for me, as the neighborhood of Fulneck seemed to imply a Moravian population in that part of the country. The other volumes I possess: those I want were borrowed for me from Mr. Latrobe, and I have extracted from them the most material parts, especially those relating to Bavian’s Kloof. The scene of Schmidt’s house, and the remains of his mission in old Helen and her Bible, are worthy subjects

even for your pen. I do not consider that you feel too strongly on these subjects. I have often said that, of all things in the world, nothing could give me so high a gratification as to find one of my own ancestors among Fox's Martyrs! nay, if I were to find one among the popish martyrs of Elizabeth or James, the feeling would be little abated. That beast Henry VIII. hauled Papists and Protestants to Smithfield upon the same hurdle: each thought the other worthy of death, and in the sure road to perdition; but I verily believe that both parties met that day in Paradise! Dear Montgomery, though you may think me a heretic, you will not rank this among *my heresies*. I would fain say something upon what I look upon as *yours* — implied in one mournful sentence. But when you speak of experience to your 'eternal and irreparable cost,' I hope and am assured that upon this point also there can be no radical difference between you and me, and that in a happier state of bodily health, you would not, and could not, have written these words. I long to see you and to talk with you of this world and of the next. When will you come to me? From Leeds there is a coach to Kendal; and from Kendal there is one here. By this letter you have more knowledge of my inner man than half the world would obtain in their whole lives; for I am one who shrinks in like a snail, when I find no sympathy — but when I do, opening myself like a flower to the morning sun. God bless you.

Your affectionate friend,

“ROBERT SOUTHEY.”

A glance behind *The World before the Flood* gives us some notion of the labors of authorship. Born of toil, how few appreciate the travail of soul which ushers a new

poem into the world. Having been born, what perils beset its infancy. Snapped at, growled over, mauled, bitten, happy if it survive to bring its merits before the tribunal of time, whose discerning verdict, if unfavorable, will consign it to a gentler end.

The "Edinburgh," baited with bigger prey, let *The West Indies* alone; but its apprehensive author already quakes for his forthcoming child. "These giants will find me out," he says, "and war against me with all their might, or I may conclude my fame and my poem destined to speedy and inevitable oblivion; for I consider their praise as entirely out of the question, and if the work has not merit enough to provoke their spleen, it will not have enough to attract any permanent admiration on the part of the public. I am endeavoring to make up my mind for the alternative of gradual success or utter failure. I feel so many difficulties in my own views of the subject, and so many imperfections in my execution of the plan, that these, added to the discouragements which have been cast in my way by others, have greatly humbled my hopes, though I believe they have quickened my exertions, and more than doubled my diligence in touching and retouching those passages that either please or provoke me the most."

Anxious to make the most of his friend's criticism, he spares no pains to perfect his labors.

"Since I received back my manuscript of *The World before the Flood* from you," he writes to Roscoe, "the entire remodification of it has been the chief, I may say the only object of my poetical studies; they have been intense and incessant in those hours that I could spare to them, amidst the hurry and cares of business, the languor of constitutional melancholy, and the occasional discouragements which I have experienced in my progress, both from the

misgivings of my own mind, and the forebodings of some of my friends, who from the beginning augured my inevitable miscarriage, and who still, to support the credit of their own prescience, do their best to make me miscarry, by hinting their fears concerning my hopes. You will, perhaps, add one to the number of these, though not from precisely similar feelings; but I mean you will probably be one of those who doubt my prudence and quake for my success, when I tell you that I have so essentially altered the plan of this piece, that it will be at least twice the extent of the original, should I live to complete it. A poet seldom, perhaps never, improves upon a plot once deliberately formed and laboriously executed, when he breaks up the whole and remodels the materials with the addition of many others. Consequently, you will fear that my new poem, whatever may be its merits, will be inferior to the old one, whatever even its faults. I will endeavor to disprove this, not by argument but by fact, of which you will be the judge when my work is finished. Meanwhile it is only reasonable, nay it is imperatively just, that my friends should suspend their sentence of condemnation till the crime is committed for which they threaten it. You *will* do this; and whatever may be your doubts of my success, you will not assist to prevent it by expressing them harshly. It is impossible in a letter to communicate an outline of my projected alterations, and indeed, if I could I would not; my plan must be seen and judged in its execution, and not in the abstract; for it might appear good in the latter, and miserable in the former, as in the latter it might promise little, and in the former work miracles."

On the cares and perplexities of his calling, the friendly sympathy of Southey fell like sunshine. Personal acquaintance they had as yet none. Southey was now in the noon

of his literary excellence and domestic enjoyment. He had, indeed, to labor for his daily bread, but head and heart whole for the task. Keswick, his forty years' home, is in the midst of the "finest and most rememberable" of English scenery; Skiddaw, with its giant grandeur; the larch-clad slopes of Latrig; Derwent-water, gemmed with islands, and girdled by field and forest; Greta, with its babbling melodies—these, with friendly neighbors, household felicities, and a growing library, might well compensate for the brilliant society and literary quickening of the metropolis, nearly three hundred miles off.

"MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

"You talk of yourself and me in terms of comparison upon which I must not comment, lest you should be as much pained by the comment as I am by the text. Let that pass. If I had not admired your poetry, and felt it, and loved it, and loved you for its sake, I should not so often have thought of you, and spoken of you, and determined to see you, nor have broken through the belt of ice at last.

"You wish me a sounder frame, both of body and mind, than your own. My body, God be thanked! is as convenient a tenement as its occupier could desire. When you see me you will fancy me far advanced in consumption, so little is there of it; but there has never been more: and though it is by no means unlikely (from family predisposition) that this may be my appointed end, it is not at all the more likely because of my lean and hungry appearance. I am in far more danger of nervous diseases, from which nothing but perpetual self-management, and the fortunate circumstances of my life and disposition, preserve me. Nature gave me an indefatigable activity of mind, and a buoyancy of spirit which has ever enabled me to think

little of difficulties, and to live in the light of hope; these gifts, too, were accompanied with an hilarity which has enabled me to retain a boy's heart to the age of eight-and-thirty: but my senses are perilously acute—impressions sink into me too deeply; and at one time ideas had all the vividness and apparent reality of actual impressions to such a degree, that I believe a speedy removal to a foreign country, bringing with it a total change of all external objects, saved me from imminent danger. The remedy, or, at least, the prevention, of this is variety of employment; and that it is that has made me the various writer that I am, even more than the necessity of pursuing the gainful paths of literature. If I fix my attention, morning and evening, upon one subject, and if my latest evening studies are of a kind to interest me deeply, my rest is disturbed and broken; and those bodily derangements ensue that indicate great nervous susceptibility. Experience having taught me this, I fly from one thing to another, each new train of thought neutralizing, as it were, the last; and thus in general maintain the balance so steadily, that I lie down at night with a mind as tranquil as an infant's.

“That I am a very happy man I owe to my early marriage. When little more than one-and-twenty, I married under circumstances as singular as they well could be—and, to all appearances, as improvident; but from that hour to this, I have had reason to bless the day. The main source of disquietude was thus at once cut off; I had done with hope and fear upon the most agitating and most important action of life, and my heart was at rest. Several years elapsed before I became a father; and then the keenest sorrow which I ever endured was for the loss of an only child, twelve months old. Since that event I have had five children, most of whom have been taken

from me. Of all the sorrows these are the most poignant ; but I am the better for them, and never pour out my soul in prayer without acknowledging that these dispensations have drawn me nearer to God.

“ But I will not pursue this strain too far. The progress of my mind through many changes and mazes of opinion, you shall know hereafter ; and the up-hill work which I have had in the world — up-hill, indeed, but by a path of my own choosing, and always with the conviction that I was gaining the ascent, as well as toiling for it. Something I must say, while there is yet room for it, concerning *The World before the Flood*. You say that you are about to begin it again : before you do this, reconsider during one half-hour — what doubtless you have considered long ago — whether it would not be better to make the Flood itself the termination of the poem, which would render no other alteration of the story [necessary], as far as I understand it, than that of relating the assumption of Enoch in the person of a narrator instead of your own. It seems to me you would gain a grandeur and even a unity beyond what your present design affords. My intention was to assume Burnett’s theory [of the Deluge], a book almost unequalled for its power of imagination, and to have connected Whiston’s with it. I have conceived a youth, the bosom friend of Japhet, perfectly convinced by Noah, but refusing to flee from the wrath to come, because the maid whom he loved (though herself convinced also) will not forsake her parents. Their death, followed by their immediate beatitude, would have made an impressive scene. The outstanding figure of the anti-Anakim or Jacobinical party (for I had the parallel strongly in my mind) was a man with the best feelings and the best intentions ; but erring in this — that he lived without God in the world ; that he trusted in

his own strength; and, provided he were likely to attain his end, was regardless of the means. He, after a St. Bartholomew massacre of all his party, was to have burnt (* * * ?) a sacrifice to the god-tyrant. The great temple-palace was to have been some Tower-of-Babel edifice, built in despite of prophecy, and as if defying the vengeance that was denounced. It would have resisted the weight of the waters of the Flood, and have overstood all things, till (following Burnett's sublime vision) the shell of the earth gave way. You have here all that is worth remembering of a plan which never went farther than this. If any part of it could serve you as a hint, believe me, Montgomery, I should feel glad at having contributed one unhewn stone to your building. God bless you.

“Your affectionate friend,

“ROBERT SOUTHEY.”

Roscoe thus writes to Montgomery:—

“Allerton, January 2, 1812.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I have been quite shocked on seeing *The World before the Flood* advertised, as being in a state of forwardness, by the booksellers, at the end of the Edinburgh Review. Is it possible that my very culpable neglect in not replying to your last kind letter can have deprived me of the opportunity of seeing it in its improved state before it appears in public? I assure you, most feelingly, that this will give me the greatest concern—not that I conceive that any suggestions of mine can be of the least service—but because I shall be deprived of a high gratification, and perhaps lead you into an opinion that I am indifferent to the fate of a work of which I have the highest opinion, as far as I was favored with a perusal. You were so good as

to say that I should probably hear from you again before the publication, but as this was coupled with an unperformed contingency, that *I* should write in the mean time, I cannot pervert it into a breach of promise. I presume from the circumstances to which I have referred, that the work is already at press, and that I shall not get a sight of it till published. If this be the case, allow me at least the satisfaction of thinking that my silence has not been attributed to a wrong cause, or that I could be supposed for a moment to cease to be solicitous either for your favorable opinion, or the success of your productions. I believe I might have as good a right as most others to allege excuses of business, &c., but the truth is, that a procrastinating disposition, and an unconquerable reluctance to take up a pen when I once get it out of my fingers, are the principal causes of my offence, and the great plagues of my life.

“Could not this inconvenience in some degree be remedied, and could we not contrive to have an interview, when more can be said in an hour than can be written in a week? When my son William had the pleasure of seeing you at Sheffield, he formed some expectation that you might be induced to visit this part of the country. Let me then inform you that I have lately enlarged my house, and that I can accommodate a friend; and that I know no one whom it would give me greater pleasure to see under my roof than yourself, where you shall be your own master, and divide your time between town and country, reading and exercise, as you wish. No time can be inconvenient, if I have only a day or two’s notice to be in the way; and I shall only add, that the sooner it takes place, the more agreeable it will be to,

“My dear sir, your ever faithful friend,

“W. ROSCOE.”

In reply, the poet writes :—

“Sheffield, January 17, 1812.

“DEAR SIR,

“I do not know whether I was more pleased or sorry at the concern which you express in your last kind letter, lest I should have prepared my long poem for the public, without again laying it before you in manuscript. But I should, indeed, have been grieved, if your apprehension had been well-founded, and I had forfeited your confidence by not giving you mine, when it was most due, and where I might expect to be essentially benefited by your candid but indulgent criticisms. I will tell you the truth. You were the last friend to whom I communicated the poem in its original state. When I received it back from you, I laid it aside, with all the comments which had been made upon it, for several months, and, indeed, shut it as much as possible out of my thoughts; my mind was wearied of the subject; I had looked upon it, as one may look upon the sun, till it becomes darkness, and the eye turns for refreshment to green fields. Glorious as it had appeared to me at first, at length it either lost its lustre or I my sight with gazing at it. Indeed, I was dissatisfied with my own execution of the poem, and disheartened, almost to despair, by the strictures which had been passed upon it by some of my best friends. You and Dr. Aikin were by far the most favorable in your judgments, and I attribute none of my misery on this occasion to either of you; at the same time I do not mean to arraign the severer sentences of my other friends, but they told me with more boldness of the faults of my poem, and almost persuaded me that it was worthless, or my mind powerless, for I could not for a very long time conceive any way to render the plan more inter-

esting, without which they convinced me it was impossible to please the public with such a piece. While I was meditating the renovation of it, Longman and Co. wrote to me to say that they were preparing a list of works for publication, and they wished my name to appear with an announcement of any poem that I might have in hand. This was in autumn, 1810. I gave them the title of *The World before the Flood*, but told them it certainly would not be ready for the press in less than twelve months. It was, however, announced, most prematurely, as I now find, for the poem, though again announced after the interval of a year, is not likely to be fit for publication before next Christmas, at the earliest. Towards the latter end of 1810, having new-cast the form of my piece, I began to work upon it with considerable spirit, and continued diligently at my task till June last; when, having finished four cantos, the greater part of which was original matter, I sent the manuscript to my severest critic, who is at the same time one of the sincerest and warmest of my friends. He kept the copy till November, and then returned it with such a terrifying string of remarks attached to it, that I was ready to commit both the poem and the comment to the flames, when I found I had been laboring eighteen months almost in vain. I laid them out of my sight for a month, and then with a trembling hand began to trace the poem line by line over again, altering, if not amending, wherever he had found fault, but pertinaciously adhering to my own plan. I have nearly gone through these four first cantos; I had written a fifth, which my Aristarchus had not seen, being composed in the interval while he had the others in his Inquisition chambers. This is the *statu quo* of *The World before the Flood*, but if I have health and a sound mind, I mean to execute my plan in my own way now; and, availing myself of all the

critiques which lie by me on the poem in its original state, I will not be diverted by any future interference of friends till I have completely gone through the task which I have set to myself. Then, indeed, I trust I shall be as willing as a poet ought to be, to hear the opinions of those whom he esteems, in order to form his *own*, concerning the merit and probable success of his work. If I have any opportunity, in the course of the summer, of safely conveying to you any considerable portion of the poem in its progress, I will most gladly avail myself of it, and thankfully receive your remarks and advice. But till I have two copies of the MS., I dare not again trust it to a coach-office entry, for I was held in miserable suspense when I sent the four first cantos to my friend above-mentioned, who lives in London, and who left it just at the time my precious packet arrived, and did not acknowledge the receipt of it for several weeks. I had no transcript, and a very imperfect remembrance of upwards of eleven hundred lines, the scanty painful fruit of eight months' labor. Should I be enabled (though at present I see no prospect of it), to accept of your very kind invitation this year, to pay a visit to Liverpool, you shall see all I may have at the time, and we will discuss freely every part of it, if you are not already sick of the subject from this tiresome detail of circumstances sadly interesting to me, but of little importance to anybody else. I have been thus particular, not to indulge the petulance or the vanity of my own feelings, but from sincere respect to you, and an anxious desire to convince you that I have not wilfully either slighted or neglected one to whom I am so truly and gratefully indebted. Since I last wrote to you I have had an unexpected opportunity of opening a friendly correspondence with Mr. Southey; a man whom I now feel as much disposed to love for his own sake, as I before

admired him for his incomparable talents. I am thus suddenly reminded of this rich acquisition to my few but valuable friendships with eminent as well as excellent men, by having just received a frank, enclosing a transcript of the first canto of his new poem, 'Pelayo,' which he had previously promised me. He, it seems, is not afraid to submit his unpublished poems to the test of confidential criticism, which I have found of all criticism the most difficult to meet; because there is so much delicacy and respect due to the persons exercising it, that whatever be the honest judgment of a poet's own mind (which, after all, he is bound to abide by, no less in justice to the public than to himself), when he differs from their decisions (and their decisions are often contradictory), he appears to do so from self-will or self-love, and he is gravely told that a poet is the most incompetent judge of his own works. This I do positively deny, and I affirm on the contrary, that that man, whom all allow to *be* a poet, is the best individual judge of his own productions, though unquestionably the true worth of them can only be ascertained by the general estimation in which they are held by others who are qualified, each for himself but no one for the public, to judge of them. I have hastily, but earnestly, read over Mr. S.'s canto of 'Pelayo,' and the first impression on my mind concerning it is, that after the general opening, which did not strike me particularly, the remainder constitutes the most awakening introduction to a story that I have met with in modern poetry. I have always considered Southey to stand foremost and alone — for the second is far behind him — of his contemporaries. I find a thousand faults in him, and perhaps there may be half that number fairly chargeable upon his poetry, but they are faults of style and manner — wilful faults, and therefore incorrigible ones; yet I delight in him

beyond any one of his brethren, because I am more in his power—he carries me whither he pleases with an ease and a velocity so deeply transporting, that it seems less the force of another mind than the spontaneous impulse of my own that bears me along.

“Should next summer be a fortnight longer than from my present foresight and the tables of the almanac it is likely to be, I will certainly endeavor to employ it well, by making an excursion that shall include both Liverpool and Keswick; a few days spent at each would be such a refreshment as my mind, sick of its solitary meditations, and weary of the imperfect and laborious communication of a few of its thoughts in letters, greatly needs to quicken and warm it on these subjects, the very interest of which overwhelms and enchants in loneliness,—for I have almost no literary society here; and amidst the vexations of business, troubles of heart known only to myself, and, indeed, incommunicable to others, together with exercises both of my understanding and my feelings on subjects the most awful and important,—amidst these trials and occupations, occasional literary discourse with superior men would be a great enjoyment to me, who have little relish for the pleasures of dissipation, or even of innocent and healthful sports and pastimes. When you favor me with another letter, will you say when you heard last of Mr. Carey, the poet and artist, who has cast me off for more than two years, without assigning any cause for a silence that distresses me, principally because I fear I have unwittingly offended him. Even if I knew where he was, I should not intrude myself upon him, but I shall always be glad to hear that he is well, and that he is doing well. With best remembrance to your family,

“I remain your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.”

“Thank you for your comments on ‘Kehama,’” Southey again writes. “The best reply that I can make to what you say of the line — ‘never should she behold her father more,’ is to say that it is altered upon your suggestion. You say Kailyal is a Christian—is it not because the poem, supposing the truth of the mythology on which it is built, requires from her faith and resignation? I know not how it was that in my youth the mythologies and superstitions of various nations laid strong hold on my imagination and struck deep root in it; so that before I was twenty, one of my numerous plans was that of exhibiting the most striking fiction of each in a long poem. ‘Thalaba’ and ‘Kehama’ are the fruits of that early plan. ‘Madoc’ partakes of it, but only incidentally. If I had gained money as well as reputation by these poems, the whole series would ere this have been completed. Do not misunderstand me; when I talk of gaining money, nothing more is meant than supporting myself by my labors; and the literal truth is, that for many years I did not write a line of poetry, because I could not afford it! ‘Kehama’ was written before breakfast in hours borrowed from sleep; and so is ‘Pelayo,’ as far as it has yet proceeded. The world is brightening upon me now. I get well paid for prose; and yet even in this the capricious humor of the times is apparent. Some of the best years of my life have been devoted to the ‘History of Portugal and its Dependencies,’ in a series of works of which only one volume is yet before the public, but upon which as much labor and scrupulous research has been bestowed as ever was or will be given to historical compilation. These works will scarcely, while I live, pay for their own materials; whereas I might be employed, if I chose, from morning till night,

in reviewing the productions of Messrs. Tag, Rag, and Bobtail, at ten guineas per sheet.

“Dear Montgomery, you say you wrote of nothing but yourself; only look back upon the great I’s which I have sent you in return. I have always said that we English are the honestest people in the world, because we are the only people who always write that important word with a capital letter, as if to show every man’s sense of its consequence. I long to see your antediluvian work. Do not talk to me of Alfred—for I am engaged three subjects deep after ‘Pelayo,’ and Heaven knows when that will be completed. The next in order is ‘Philip’s War in New England,’ with a primitive Quaker for the hero.”

CHAPTER X.

MAY IN LONDON — MAY MEETINGS — "THE GOOD OLD WAY" — RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES — COLERIDGE AND CAMPBELL LECTURE — LETTERS TO PARKEN — LETTER FROM SOUTHEY — PARKEN'S DEATH — LETTERS TO IGNATIUS MONTGOMERY — BUXTON.

THE spring of 1812 again found Montgomery in London. The May meetings were the chief attraction, for May already was the anniversary month of those great religious organizations which send the life-blood of Christianity throughout the world. Many of them were then in the freshness of their youth. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, one of the first organized Protestant missionary enterprises, could indeed date back its charter more than one hundred years. It embraced both a home and foreign field; and extensive missionary operations were carried on in this country under its patronage. John Wesley came to Georgia in its service. Besides a Missionary, it was a Bible and Tract Society, issuing scanty supplies of religious reading long before the birth of institutions for that appropriate object. The benefactions of this charity flowed more directly from the English Church.

In 1794, an article appeared in the London Evangelical Magazine, a Dissenting journal, upon the duty and importance of foreign missions, which immediately excited the most lively interest. The Christian public were ripe

for action. A convention was convoked, and for three days Spafields, one of Lady Huntington's London chapels, was filled to overflowing. Rowland Hill, George Burder, and Dr. Haweis presented and enforced the object which brought them together, with convincing power. The result was the London Missionary Society, which in two years purchased a ship, and sent off twenty-nine missionaries to distant continents, and islands of the sea. The story of the "Duff" and her precious freight, and the glowing hopes and fervent prayers which followed in her wake, are too well known to be repeated—an imperishable record of the triumphs and defeats which signalize the onward progress of the Gospel in the world.

This quickening spirit of evangelism, rising from the ebbing waters of the "great awakening" which has irrigated Christendom, hearkened and heard on all sides the sighing of souls famishing for the Bread of Life. The voice of many a living evangelist and stout-hearted itinerant was gone. Field-preaching, with the marvellous oratory which gave it power, had passed by. The spiritual emergencies which had marshalled such men as Whitefield and Wesley, Romaine and Rowland Hill, had been met, and now, in the subsidence of extraordinary measures and the withdrawal of distinguished champions, the sober second thought of the Christian public was called upon to devise ways and means systematically and permanently to supply the people with religious instruction. In 1781, a village pastor, burdened with the spiritual needs of his flock, wrote and printed a little tract, which he sent to all the houses round; some received it gladly, and others mocked at "The Good Old Way," for so was it named. The success of the little book, however, pleased and encouraged him. He soon published six more, at a

“penny a piece,” rich in goodly teachings, and so for nearly twenty years did the excellent and pains-taking George Burder unfold to himself and the world the idea of a Tract Society. In May, 1799, he went up to London to attend the anniversary of the London Missionary Society. A sermon was preached in Surrey chapel. At its close, while the hearts of Christians were glowing with the preacher’s eloquence, a few turned aside into an “upper chamber,” to whom Mr. Burder disclosed his experiments and his success in a new field of evangelical labor. The little group listened with profound interest. “Combination and enlargement,” was the immediate response. The next morning, forty gentlemen breakfasted together at St. Paul’s Coffee-house. Joseph Hughes was there, with his clear head and persistent industry; Rowland Hill, with his exuberant wit and glowing vigor; Wilks, with his sagacity and clownishness; Thomas Wilson, thoughtful and earnest. What other dishes were discussed we do not know; but certain it is, “The Religious Tract Society” was served up and well digested. This was on the 9th of May, 1799.

When Burder was writing and printing his first little sheet in Lancaster, a gentleman, in pursuit of a gardener, was rumaging among the neglected masses of Gloucester. Troops of noisy, dirty, swearing children dogged his heels. “Oh, sir,” exclaimed a poor woman, “if you could only see them Sundays. There are a great many more and a hundred times worse—it is a very hell upon earth.”

The gentleman may have found a gardener in his walk; but he found something more, for he stumbled on his great life-work, and Robert Raikes went home to project the first Sunday-school which the world had yet seen. His success kindled an interest all over the kingdom. Every-

where pious men and women offered themselves in this new field of labor, and multitudes of children, hitherto totally neglected and helpless in spiritual poverty, were gathered into these folds of religious instruction. Every city and sect espoused them; and in July, 1803, a "Sunday-school Union" was formed in London to give efficiency to the general cause. In another part of England the tears of a little girl, whom stormy weather hindered from taking her weekly seven miles' walk over the hills to read a Welsh Bible, deeply affected the heart of her pastor. The circumstance was expressive of the general scarcity of the word of God, and the grief, "which fell a little short of anguish," felt in some districts of Wales on account of it. The pastor's heart was stirred, as men's minds are sometimes stirred by seemingly simple and strong incidents, when the public mind is ripe for action, and new tracks of effort are to be struck out into the teeming future. Rev. Thomas Charles, for that was the pastor's name, journeyed up to London, to attend a business meeting of the newly formed Tract Society. It was in December, 1802. "My people want Bibles. Wales is famishing for the word of God," is the pastor's agonizing cry. Can such a want be put off or neglected? But how supply it? The question needed little reiteration. "A Society must be formed for this purpose, and if for Wales why not for the empire and the *world*?" said Joseph Hughes, his eye kindling and his heart encompassing the world-wide want. Joseph Hughes was a Baptist clergyman, but no sectarian leading-strings crippled the catholic breadth of his manly piety.

The thought has taken wings. Granville Sharp lays hold of it. Wilberforce embraces it. Zachary Macaulay advocates it. Lord Teignmouth subscribes to it. Bishops

and laymen, episcopal and dissenting interests rally around the proposed institution. At a general meeting of its friends on the 2d of May, 1804, at the London Tavern, the new Society may be said to have been christened under the name of the "British and Foreign Bible Society," in whose capacious grasp every nation under heaven may hear the word of God in their own language.

Montgomery had now begun to take a growing interest in these institutions. The year before (1811), Mr. Hughes, with John Owen, and Dr. Steinkopff, Secretaries of the Bible Society, visited Sheffield, and advocated its cause before a crowded audience. The editor of the *Iris* was present, who, in the next number, thus warmly expresses himself:

"To confess the truth, we surrendered our feelings so entirely to the speakers on this delightful occasion, that we were perfectly passive to every momentary impression which they made in the course of their respective addresses; and it was not till long after the meeting was over, that we could so compose ourselves, as to endeavor to fix on our mind any definite idea of the pleasure which we had enjoyed, or recollect even the prominent features of the speeches which we had heard. We certainly never did witness such transcendent and contrasted abilities so well and so successfully employed. Yet, after all, what were the men, and what was their manner of speech, in comparison with the sublime and inspiring subject on which they exercised their talents? Let us give God the glory: it was the altar on which these gifts were laid that sanctified the gifts; and though we may not be able to heap such precious offerings there, yet to that altar let us bring what we have, though it be nothing but a broken heart and a contrite spirit. When the wise men from the East had opened their treasures, they presented the infant

Saviour with gold, frankincense, and myrrh; yet was the simple homage of the shepherds at his manger-side not less accepted. Let each, let all of us, then, join hand and heart, however poor, however weak we may be, to forward the glorious work in which these our elder brethren are so pre-eminently engaged."

In the spring of 1812, as we have said, Montgomery visited the metropolis, chiefly to attend the anniversaries of these religious Societies, towards whose purposes and progress his Christian sympathies were now strongly attracted. Exeter Hall, a place so intimately associated with the May meetings in our day, was not built until 1830. Freemason's Hall, in Great Queen street, Holborn, was then the principal centre of popular assembling, and its walls long resounded with the stirring appeals of anniversary eloquence. "The Royal Institution" also offered its bill to the literary tastes of the Sheffield visitor, where Coleridge and Campbell were drawing brilliant houses by their lectures on poetry. The author of 'The Pleasures of Hope' and 'Gertrude of Wyoming' lived in the beautiful village of Sydenham, some miles from London, dependent upon publishers for his daily bread. And Coleridge—it was then "poor Coleridge!" The terrible habit which quenched the light of his genius, was rapidly gaining the mastery, "so that by two o'clock," says one, sadly 'retrospecting on his fallen greatness, "when he should have been in attendance at the Royal Institution, he was too often unable to rise from his bed. Then came dismissals of audience after audience with pleas of illness; and on many of his lecture days, I have seen all Albermarle street closed by a lock of carriages filled with women of distinction, until the servants of the Institution, or their own footmen, advanced to the carriage doors with the

intelligence that Mr. Coleridge had been taken suddenly ill." And how did he appear, if happily able to reach his chair? "No heart, no soul, was in anything he said; no strength of feeling in recalling universal truths; no power of originality or compass of moral relations in his novelities—all was a poor, faint reflection from jewels once scattered in the highway by himself in the prodigality of his early opulence—a mendicant's dependence on the alms dropped from the overflowing treasury of happier times."

What was Montgomery's impression of his brother poets? "Campbell read from a paper before him," he replies, "but in such an energetic manner, and with such visible effect, as I should hardly have supposed possible. His statements were clear, his style elegant, and his reasoning conclusive. After having wound up the attention of his hearers to the highest pitch, brought his arguments to a magnificent climax, and closed with a quotation from Shakspeare, in his best manner, off he went, like a rocket! This lecture was the more striking, from its contrast with that delivered by Coleridge the evening before from the same rostrum. In the former case, the lecturer, though impressing me at once, and in a high degree, with the power of genius, occasionally accompanied the most sublime but inconclusive trains of reasoning with the most intense—not to say painful—physiognomical expression I ever beheld; his brows being knit, and his cheeks puckered into deep triangular wrinkles, by the violence of his own emotions. But, notwithstanding the frequent obscurity of his sentiments, and this 'painful' accompaniment, when the lecture closed, you could not say you had been disappointed. Whatever Campbell undertakes he finishes; Coleridge too often leaves splendid attempts incomplete. The former, when I heard him, seemed like a

race-horse, starting, careering, and coming in with admirable effect ; the latter resembled that of one of the King's heavy dragoons, rearing, plunging, and prancing in a crowd, performing grand evolutions, but making little or no progress."

But among the manifold attractions which literature and art could offer in the splendid capital, the leanings of his heart are thus disclosed :

"London may indeed be the metropolis of vice, but it is the metropolis of virtue also. If sin abounds there, more than elsewhere, grace likewise abounds there more, and is thence universally diffused through the nation. The fact is plain: in London the masses of good and evil are so condensed and contrasted, that when we contemplate both together, we are appalled at the enormous disproportion ; if we look at the evil separately, we tremble lest fire from heaven should suddenly come down and consume the city more guilty than Sodom or Gomorrah ; yet when we turn to behold the good that is there, we might hope that London would be permitted to stand for ever, for the sake of the righteous who dwell in it. Every lover of nature, and of the God of nature in his visible works, prefers the country to the town. Of all the months, the month of May—and such a May as smiles and blooms around us now—of all the months the month of May is justly celebrated by the poet as being,

" 'If not the first, the fairest of the year.'

"At this enchanting season, when an invisible hand is awakening the woods, and shaking the trees into foliage,—when an invisible foot is walking the plains and the valleys, where flowers and fragrance follow its steps,—when a voice, unheard by man, is teaching every little bird to sing,

in every bush, the praises of God,—when a beneficent power, perceived only in its effects, is diffusing life, and light, and liberty, and joy throughout the whole creation,—at this enchanting season, who would not love the country? Who would choose the filth, and confinement, and tumult of the town? I love the country; I love the month of May; yet the month of May, when the country is most beautiful (had I freedom of choice), I would spend in London. And why? Because in *that* month the assemblies of the people of God are most frequent and most full. Then, too, the tribes from the provinces go up to worship there at the anniversaries of various institutions. The bliss and festivity of nature in spring are but faint and imperfect resemblances of the enjoyment of those seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Most High.”

On his return home, the thread of his summer life we draw out from his letters. He thus writes to Parken:

“Sheffield, June 10, 1812.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“This is the fifth letter I have written to-day (you would tell me it is not yet written, but it will be before you can tell me so, Mr. Special Pleader!) and, therefore, I promise you it shall be a brief one. Indeed, I have nothing to say except that I am once more in Sheffield, but not yet settled into myself; neither the whirl of mind, nor the nervous agitation of my frame, have yet been wearied into rest. Since I left home in the beginning of May, I have never yet had one hour of sober thinking, or sober feeling,—I mean every-day thinking and feeling,—thinking and feeling that do not wear and tear out life itself, with alternate joys and torments, reveries or trances. O how I long for *quietude*! After all the excesses and exhaustion of such

intercourse as I held in London with spirits of fire, and air, and earth, and water,—for spirits of each of these descriptions I encountered,—my heart and soul desire nothing so earnestly as peace in solitude. In town I had too much society; at home I have too little; four weeks of the former have therefore so unsettled me, that it will require four weeks of the latter to bring me back to my lonely habits—I mean to the enjoyment of them, in the easy, regular, unconscious exercise of them. Certainly I saw and heard a great deal in London, but it was like seeing the hedges, or hearing the nightingale (as I actually did) out of a stage-coach window, the former in such rapid retrograde motion, that no distinct picture of them could be retained, the notes of the latter so interrupted or deadened with the lumbering of wheels, and the cracking of the whip, that they were caught like the accidental tones of the *Æolian* harp, when the wind will neither play on it nor yet let it alone, but dallies with the strings, till they tremble into momentary music, instantly dissolving, and disappointing the ear that aches with listening. I wonder if you will understand this; I am sure I do; and yet I doubt whether I can make any one else. But all the sights and sounds of the last month were not thus ineffable and evanescent to me. Your kind looks are still smiling upon me, and your kind words still heard in my heart. I was often dull and distracted in your presence; but it was ‘my weakness and my melancholy’ made me so; for towards the latter end of my visit, I was much indisposed, and most so when I had most occasion to be otherwise. My brother and sister, to whom I have written, will tell you more of this, and of my wretched journey home. I am, however, I thank God, greatly recovered, and on a review of the whole, I am unfeignedly grateful to the

Father of all mercies as well for what I suffered as what I enjoyed during my stay in the metropolis and its neighborhood. When you see Doctor or Mrs. Gregory, remember me most kindly to them; I shall never forget the delightful hours I have spent in their society: every blessing of time and eternity be theirs!"

A month later he wrote:—

"Since my arrival at Sheffield, though I have neither been confined to my bed or room, I have not been in a healthy state of feeling for an hour. Colds, coughs, pains in the chest, numbness of brain, and numberless hypochondriacal plagues, successively, partially, or altogether, have afflicted me; and at present I expect no relief. But the wounded spirit and the breaking heart, these are the hardest to bear with resignation—resignation to the will of God. Not that I feel so much over personal suffering, or repine at my temporal lot, but with these disorders of my perishing frame, there comes so much confusion, and doubt, and darkness, and desolation into my soul, that the powers of my mind seem paralyzed, the affections of my heart withered, and every stream of hope or comfort passed away. Then, when I can neither think, nor write, converse, or even pray with connection and self-possession, I do indeed deem myself smitten, forsaken of God, and afflicted,—worthily smitten, forsaken of God, because I will not, cannot, come to him,—and afflicted, because I perversely, and yet inevitably, refuse the consolations of his Spirit. O what a mystery of woe, what a mystery of iniquity is this! God deliver me from it, or carry me through it, as his wisdom and his goodness shall see fit! You will, perhaps, ascribe my recent relapse into this melancholy

state to the interest and anxiety which I must feel in the welfare of the person by whom I sent my last unfortunate letter. It is true that I have had to suffer and sympathize with her and for her, in a very difficult situation in which she had ignorantly placed herself, during my visit to London, in which I found her on my return to Sheffield: but believe me, if my heart had no other, no heavier weight of sorrow upon it, than I must always bear on her account, I should be a happy man in comparison with the wretch that I am: my griefs lie deeper than disappointment of affection; it was those griefs that prevented me from ever yielding to the impulse of that affection, and, unless they are soon allayed, must for ever unfit me for the sweetest pleasures of this life. Surely you were not hurt by the levity of spleen which prompted me, at the time of writing, not to give you the address of the bearer of my letter. I had no worse motive for this, certainly, than that the communication would have been of no service either to you or her, as you will be convinced when I tell you she was going to Mrs. H * * * *'s, at Hampstead. There, if you have either desire or occasion to introduce yourself, at any time in the course of two months, by mentioning my name you will be kindly received by both the ladies."

But the friend to whom these letters were addressed was no more. He died, while on a circuit of professional duty, after a short illness, at Aylesbury, a man whose talents, integrity, and literary culture adorned every station which Providence had assigned him.

"In praise and blame alike sincere,
But still most kind when most severe."

The following letter was addressed to his brother, the Rev. Ignatius Montgomery, and his wife :

“ Sheffield, July 27, 1812.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

“ You will immediately forgive my fortnight’s silence at a most interesting and critical juncture, when I inform you that I fully expected that on Monday and Tuesday last you would have heard both *from* me and *of* me, by our friend Parken, as I despatched a letter on the Saturday preceding to meet him on his return from the circuit, and requested him to inform you that I continued so weak in body, indeed so much indisposed, that I had determined to try the Buxton waters this week, but that you should hear from me before I left Sheffield. Had I not relied upon this, assuredly I should have written at that time directly to you, to congratulate you with gladness of affection on the birth of the dear little stranger that has been sent amongst us to add to our number and our felicity. Anxiously and earnestly have I longed for this intelligence, and thrice welcome it was, though it came when I was in darkness of spirit and debility of frame, that made life burthensome and death dreadful to me. Do not, I intreat you, as you love me, as you desire your own peace, and as you trust in God, our common Saviour, do not be alarmed at this acknowledgment of my state of mind and body, which has been the same in a greater or less degree ever since my return to Sheffield. I am not despairing; God is only humbling me under his mighty hand, and I bow to the chastisement and kiss the rod that smites me, as I lie in the dust of self-abasement and self-abhorrence at his feet. ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’ is my prayer; and that prayer will be answered in his good time, and in his own manner. O how mysterious are his judgments, and his ways past

finding out! My dear friend Parken *now* knows, though we know it not, nor can we comprehend it, why *he* was thus unexpectedly removed from us, and he acknowledges both the wisdom and the mercy of that awful visitation. Three letters this morning brought me the intelligence of his premature death,—not premature, I trust, for I am persuaded that he was prepared to meet his God, though neither he nor we expected the summons would be sent so soon. My heart, which these sad tidings rent, has already been flowing through two letters to friends on this distressing subject, and I will not—indeed I cannot without aggravated misery to myself and unnecessary infliction upon you—dwell longer on it here. My letter did not arrive in time for him either to read or hear read; therefore my message to you could not be delivered. I thank God for his merciful preservation of my dear sister in the hour of sorrow,—but her sorrow has been turned into joy. O may she live to bring up the dear child thus happily given her, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and may that child live to be the comfort of its parents by fulfilling all their hopes to see it grow in stature and in favor both with God and man! I cannot object to any name for the sweet infant, which those who love it best shall choose for it; but I thought—indeed I made myself almost sure—that it would be called *Mary Agnes*. Were not both its grandmothers Marys, and is not its mother Agnes? I know no reason, at the same time, why it should not be Henrietta, or why I should not love my new niece as well by that name as those I have mentioned: ‘the rose by any other name would smell as sweet.’ By whatsoever name it shall be called in due season, I have already placed its lovely little image in my heart amongst my warmest affections,—and the inscription may be added any time.

O how would it rejoice me to meet you at Buxton, as I met you last year, and spend, as I propose to spend, a fortnight there! I have told you the best and worst, as Ignatius desires that I would. Pray for me, dear brother and sister, that my faith fail not,—indeed it is hard tried at times. I am well pleased that John James has consented to abdicate his throne, and that it is so much better filled by one who is so much less than he. Kiss both the deposed king and the new-crowned queen from Uncle James. Kindest regards to Robert and his dear family. Farewell!—Your faithful and affectionate brother.”

To Joseph Aston :

“Sheffield, July 28, 1812.

“DEAR FRIEND,

. . . “Procrastination is the mother of every sin of omission of which I am daily guilty, and by which my life has run so much to waste, that I may almost say the summer is past, and I have scarcely begun to sow for the harvest. This, alas! will apply equally to my temporal and spiritual concerns. I am always a day behind time, and I fear sometimes that I shall be so at the last, and thus lose eternity. Many melaucholy considerations that press upon my mind, and fill my heart with sadness just now, lead insensibly into this train of reflection whenever I take up my pen to write to a friend—which indeed is as seldom as possible; for I have been for two months past nearly unfit either for society or solitude, for correspondence or meditation. The month of May I spent in London, from whence I returned very ill, and then followed such a series of colds and nervous affections as I never experienced before with so little intermission; for I have always been subject to these, though hitherto with lucid intervals

that admitted both of hope and enjoyment. Now, however, the evil spirit seems to possess me entirely, and the Harp of Sorrow, that once so sweetly soothed the grief it could not cure, has almost lost its power to charm. In this state of debility and depression, both of mind and body, I am induced to try the air and the waters of Buxton. I expect to set out for that Bethesda to-morrow, and stay about a fortnight, earnestly praying, and amidst doubts and fears that assail and perplex me at times, still trusting that He who gave me life will yet bless me with a moderate degree of health, and 'spare me a little longer, that I may recover strength before I go hence and am seen no more.' Forgive the tone of anguish and complaint this letter breathes. I write so seldom to you, that when I do write, it ought to be a cordial from my heart poured into yours, lightening the one, and refreshing the other. I wish I could thus cheer and solace you; but, wanting comfort myself, how can I rejoice, by my language and sentiments, the soul of my friend? Yet I trust you need the kindness of sympathy less than I do, and that you have happiness enough and to spare, by looks, and words, and deeds of charity to friends so poor in spirit as I am. I know you will bear with me, and therefore I freely trouble you with the overflowings of my heart, which is truly full of bitterness; yet do not be alarmed for me: only imagine, and you will imagine truly, that all those hypochondriacal and constitutional infirmities which have 'grown with my growth, and strengthened with my' *weakness*, are now upon me in more than their usual measure. These will accompany me to my grave, I know; but whether they will hasten my journey thither is only known to Him who, for the wisest, best, and most merciful purposes, permits them to afflict me."

To Buxton the poet went ; and from thence, on the 9th of August, he wrote to decline Aston's invitation to visit him, adding :

"I have no heart for exertion, and no spirits for pleasure ; otherwise, it would be a great satisfaction to me to meet you once more in this world, and to meet you where you would be seen to the best advantage — in the bosom of your family. Surely we *shall* meet again in time ; but when and where cannot be foreseen. O may we meet in eternity, and never part !"

A memorial of this visit to Buxton and its vicinity, exists in the stanzas entitled *The Peak Mountains*, every line of which indicates the pensive tone of the poet's mind at this time.

Again he writes to Ignatius :

"Sheffield, September 4, 1812.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"With your last letter I received three others, all announcing the death of the best friend I ever had, or hope to have, on earth. I was very ill at the time, and preparing to set out for Buxton. This severe and sudden stroke laid me lower in the dust than I remember to have been at any time before, often and miserably as I have been prostrated there amidst the ruins of my hopes. I went to Buxton on the Wednesday following, and you will have learned already, from the annexed stanzas, in what a forlorn and suffering condition I found myself there. I stayed away three weeks ; and since my return, I thank God, my unfailing friend and helper in every time of need, I am growing stronger and healthier every day. My strength and health I consecrate to Him who gave them to me for

his own glory and for my enjoyment. . . . I was in private lodgings at Buxton, on the hill, above the Crescent. I often thought of you, and commemorated our few walks by going them over again. My rambles, however, extended further than your eyes themselves ever ventured to travel on those wild and melancholy hills, from some of which, notwithstanding, I enjoyed transporting prospects. But the chief companion of my walks was the spirit of my dear lost friend, with whom I held most sweet and mournful converse in my thoughts, where he was almost hourly present. I am persuaded that he is rejoicing in his happy release from this world of temptation and trial in which it pleased the Lord to shorten the day of his pilgrimage and sorrows. You will lament with me, for your own sakes, as I do for mine, that so excellent and amiable a companion should be so early removed, while you and your dear Agnes were only beginning to know his worth. . . . Both Agnes and you, as well as Henry [Steinhauer] were much beloved and esteemed by him; and had he been longer spared, you would have been more and more delighted with him. His talents and his heart were too much concealed by his extreme modesty in everything that concerned himself. I never knew a man so truly and quietly disinterested. . . . My kindest love to Agnes: the same to Robert and his family."

Southey again writes him :

"Keswick, October 7, 1812.

"MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

"You have here the second [he had previously received the first while in London] book of 'Pelaya,' or, as I must learn to call it, 'Roderick, the last of the Goths.' I

have more pleasure in transcribing it for you than I shall have in throwing it before the world; for though I cast my bread upon the waters in full assurance that it will be found after many days, it is with a feeling something like that I should have in setting acorns. In all the prospect, the church-yard enters into the foreground. There is another thought connected with publication, which tends as much to humiliation as it may seem to savor of pride — of the thousands who will read my poem, some for the pleasure of finding fault with it, but far, very far more undoubtedly for the pleasure it will give them, how very few are there who will really be competent to appreciate it! and how frequently have I had occasion to remember the point of Yriarte's fable, 'Bad is the censure of the wise — the blockhead's praise is worse!' But in sending to you what has been produced with passion, and elaborated with thought, I know that you will recognize whatever is true to nature; and that thus I shall have my reward. The figure of Spain may require a note to point out what a Spanish reader would instantly perceive — the badge of the military orders, the castles and lions of Castile and Leon, and the sword of my Cid.

"Your *Peak Mountains* make me repine that you did not come where you would have found subjects as much superior in loveliness as in grandeur. You have managed a very difficult stanza with great skill. The last two lines are but equal to one alexandrine, therefore objectionable. You have been aware of this, and so managed your accents that they seldom read as one. The poem is in your own true strain: it has the passion, the melancholy, and the religious ardor which are the elements of all your poetry. One of these elements, delightful as it is in such combination, I would banish from you if I knew what, like Tobit's

fumigation, could chase away dark spirits. Oh that I could impart to you a portion of that animal cheerfulness which I would not exchange for the richest earthly inheritance! For me, when those whom I love cause me no sad anxiety, the skylark in a summer morning is not more joyous than I am; and if I had wings on my shoulders, I should be up with her in the sunshine carolling for pure joy.

“But you must see how far our mountains overtop the Derbyshire hills. The leaves are now beginning to fall — come to me, Montgomery, as soon as they reappear, in the sweetest season of the year, when opening flowers and lengthening days hold out to us every day the hope of a lovelier morrow. I am a bondsman from this time till the end of April, and must get through, in the intermediate time, more work than I like to think of: through it, if no misfortune impede or prevent me, I shall get willingly and well; for I know not what it is to be weary of employment. Come to me as soon as my holidays begin. You will find none of the exhausting hurry of London, but quiet as well as congenial society within doors; and without, everything that can elevate the imagination and soothe the heart.

“I heard of you in London from Miss Betham, who saw you at Mrs. Montague’s. Thank you for inquiring about the *Missionary Reports*. If there are only the two first numbers [qq. volumes?] out of print, I will send to London for the rest, and have a few blank leaves placed at the beginning, in which to write an abstract of what is deficient, whenever I can borrow a perfect copy.

“My next poem will have something to do with missionaries, and will relate to the times and country of Eliot, the apostle of the Nituencer Indians, and the man who translated the Bible into the most barbarous language that was ever yet reduced to grammatical rules. The chief person-

age is to be a Quaker, and the story will hinge upon the best principles of Quaker philosophy, if those words may be allowed to exist in combination. The object is to represent a man acting under the most trying circumstances in that manner which he feels and believes to be right, regardless of consequences ; and in my story the principle of action will prove as instrumental at last to the preservation of the individual, as it would be to the happiness of the whole community if 'the kingdom' were 'come.'

"Do not let your poem languish longer. I, who want spurring myself, would fain spur you on to a quicker progress. I advance in these things with a pace so slow and so unlike the ardor of former times, that I should suspect more changes of temperament and loss of activity than eight-and-thirty years ought to bring with them, if I did not find or fancy a solution in the quantity of prose labor that falls to my lot. Time has been when I have written fifty, eighty, or a hundred lines before breakfast ; and I remember to have composed twelve hundred (many of them among the best I ever did produce) in a week. A safer judgment has occasioned this change ; still time may have had some share in it. I do not now love autumn as well as spring, nor the setting sun like the life and beauty of the morning. God bless you!"

CHAPTER XI.

“THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD” PUBLISHED—NEW INTERESTS—
ENGAGES IN RELIGIOUS LABORS—SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION—BIBLE
SOCIETY—HIS FIRST SPEECH—CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS BROTHER
IGNATIUS—RE-ADMISSION TO THE MORAVIAN CHURCH—DAWNING
PEACE—SUNDAY-SCHOOL LABORS.

IN the spring of 1813, *The World before the Flood* was published, prefaced by a little poem to his departed friend which thus touchingly closed :

“My task is o’er; and I have wrought
With self-rewarding toil,
To raise the scattered seeds of thought
Upon a desert soil:
Oh for soft winds and clement showers!
I seek not fruit, I planted flowers.

“Those flowers I trained, of many a hue,
Along thy path to bloom;
And little thought that I must strew
Their leaves upon thy tomb:
Beyond that tomb I lift mine eye;
Thou art not dead — thou couldst not die.”

It was the design of the author, as he tells us in *The World before the Flood*, “to present a similitude of events,

that might be imagined to have happened in the first ages of the world, in which such Scripture characters as are introduced would probably have acted and spoken as they are here made to act and speak. The story is told as a parable only; and its value in this view must be determined by its religious influence. Truth is the essence, though not the name. Truth is the spirit, though not the letter."

This poem, which is his longest, though inferior in unity and finish to Milton's master-work, with which it was sometimes unwisely compared, contains passages whose descriptive beauty, harmonious flow, and quiet earnestness, disclose some of the genuine excellences of the divine art.

"It not only satisfied the large expectations of his friends," we are told, "but elevated his name in the rank of those whom, at that time, the reading public delighted to honor."

But it is not through his larger poems that Montgomery will be best and widest known to posterity. These are indeed memorials of the quality of his genius, and the drift of his soul; it is his hymns and minor poems, the overflowings of a heart full of poetic insight and genuine feeling, which will most endear his name to future generations.

His friend, Mrs. Montague, says:

"We have *The World before the Flood*, — but we have also the *World after the Flood*; and it is impossible, though I oppose my nine children, and Basil fences himself with bankruptcy papers, that we can always keep *it* out. You will be with us in the shades of Bolton [Abbey], and your own Elysium is not more beautiful; *there* we shall enjoy your work."

And there they did enjoy it: his correspondent was in raptures with the poem:

“I have read *The World before the Flood* again and again. I do not know any character so sublime as Enoch; it has the grandeur and awful simplicity of Michael Angelo—I borrow my comparison from a sister art, for I know nothing like it in poetry. Why did you include in the volume any of your *Prison Amusements*, to bring us back to earth, and even cast us into prison?”

The painfulness of the anxiety with which he waited for, and received the verdict of the public upon his works, is somewhat abated. Years had naturally moderated expectation and tamed the passions; but more than this, other interests were engaging his affections, drawing him away from himself, and offering him that kind of labor which the spiritual exigencies of his soul most needed.

From temperament and bodily infirmities, Montgomery was prone to look upon the dark side of all events; and his religious character, of course, partook in some measure of the same element; his soul struggled long in darkness and despair, and only slowly did he appropriate to himself the comforts of the Christian faith. In such a state of mind, wrestling with inward doubts, and lingering under the shadows of Sinai, the new religious organizations of the day, instinct with a social, active, and joyous Christian life, were precisely what was needed to draw off and strengthen his religious affections; and by giving him a work to do, enabled him to gain, through love to man, a more personal consciousness of love to the Redeemer of men.

We are glad therefore to find him engaging, heart and hand, in the new religious movements which are stirring England; those which recognized no denominational differences, but united all in a common bond, Montgomery especially clung to. His broad and catholic spirit embraced all who loved the Lord, under that simple, and yet

significant name — Christian. “Life’s poor distinctions vanished here.”

“Our Saviour and his flock appeared
One Shepherd and one Fold.”

At the first anniversary of the Sunday-school Union at Sheffield, Montgomery is on the platform, and for the first time appears as a public speaker. The associations of the occasion evidently animate and arouse him.

“It is *good* for us to be here,” he says, “even as it was good for the disciples to be on the mount when their Master was transfigured before them, and appeared in his glory, no longer mere man, but God manifest in the flesh. And how shall we better employ these delightful moments than in inquiring, and profiting by the result of the inquiry,— ‘Wherein consists the happiness of heaven?’ The happiness of heaven consists in two things,—for these comprehend all that pertains to happiness,—the enjoyment of God, and the communion of saints. And wherein consists happiness on earth? The answer is the same,—in the enjoyment of God, and the communion of saints. No other enjoyment or communion, where these are excluded, can merit the name, or give more than the semblance of happiness. It becomes us then to nourish those social, endearing, exalting affections, that draw us together on occasions like these, and unite us in bonds of Christian friendship. If we love one another with pure hearts fervently, we shall love God supremely. If we fulfill the first commandment, we cannot fail in the second; if we love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, then, and not till then, shall we love our neighbor as ourself.

In the worship of God there is but one soul, one voice, one song among the ransomed of the Lord on Mount Zion, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain;' and wherefore do these account him worthy? Because 'he hath redeemed *us* from every *kindred* and *tongue*, and *people* and *nation*, and made us unto our God kings and priests.' Hence we perceive that the communion of saints, even in the enjoyment of God, consummates the full, yet forever increasing felicity of heaven. Let this communion, then, be diligently cultivated among Christians of every name and persuasion: let this felicity be begun in time, and it will be perfected through eternity."

Of the meeting the *Iris* gave a vivid account, and it would seem to have been an occasion of unusual interest.

Mr. Bennett occupied the chair, and with him henceforth we find the poet associated in manifold labors of Christian love. A few months later, taking part in the formation of a Methodist Missionary Society, in Sheffield, he thus expresses himself:

"In the Bible Society all names and distinctions of sects are blended till they are lost, like the prismatic colors in a ray of pure and perfect light: in the missionary work, though divided, they are not discordant; but, like the same colors, displayed and harmonized in the rainbow, they form an arch of glory ascending on the one hand from earth to heaven, and on the other descending from heaven to earth—a bow of promise, a covenant of peace, a sign that the storm of wrath is passing away, and the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings, breaking forth on all nations."

Extracts from a letter to his brother Ignatius and his wife on the death of a daughter, disclose more of his inner life:

"Sheffield, August 11, 1813.

"MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

"I believe that this letter will find you in that sweet and humble state of resignation to the divine will, which best becomes those who sorrow not as *they* do who are without hope; and since the bitterness of death is past, and the violence of grief subsiding into patient endurance, I may now come into your quiet dwelling in this accustomed form, and say, 'Peace be unto you.' The infant, He who lent it to you has reclaimed; and I doubt not that, to borrow a Scripture phrase, he has received his own *with usury*, at his coming, on this occasion. Remember that you occupied but till he came; he *is* come, and though your treasure is taken from you for awhile, it is only laid up in heaven in eternal security for you, and will be restored to you in the day of the Lord, when she whom you loved so dearly and mourn so bitterly will be one of the brightest jewels in your crown of righteousness. I say this under the perfect persuasion that you faithfully fulfilled your duty as parents to this little saint thus early translated, yet in good time—for it was the Lord's time—to the kingdom of her heavenly Father. This providence you both feel has drawn you nearer to God; and the nearer you have been drawn to Him, have you not been the more strengthened and comforted, and submissive to His will, till at length you had no will of your own, and were enabled to rejoice amidst your affliction, in hope of the glory that shall hereafter be revealed, of which Henrietta is already a partaker, and to which you, though later than she, shall finally be advanced? Since we met in London in May last year, this dear child has been born into our family, has lived in it her full appointed time, and is entered into rest, even before she entered into conflict

with sin. I had a sister once, but she was in heaven before I appeared on earth; with the lovely idea which I form of her, the idea of sweet Henrietta shall now be associated in my mind—not only in my imagination but in my affections; for, though I never saw either, they live and they will live forever, where—O God grant it!—where I would be too, when I have put off all the sorrows of mortality. These two little ones are perhaps now companions in paradise. Henrietta—you know not how much she learned on earth—may already have met both her mother's and her father's parents at the footstool of the throne of the Redeemer—for that is their place even in heaven; and I can imagine how many welcome things she has told them concerning Agnes and Ignatius. Me she never knew: it is well, for so can she have nothing to say which a spirit in the body might imagine would grieve even a spirit in glory to hear. My dear brother and sister, how little have you to mourn for in the loss of a child so innocent, because so young! and how much cause to rejoice, under that loss, that she is rescued forever from the evil which is in this world, and the world which is to come! At this moment, while I am writing in a distant part of the kingdom, you are preparing to commit the precious dust of that redeemed one to the grave. In spirit I am with you. When that dust shall rise again at the last day, O may we rejoice *together*! I must tear my hand away from this subject, or it will fill my letter; and I have a few things to say concerning myself. I have for several weeks past undergone sore trials and buffetings in my own soul. At times it has seemed as if the Lord had forsaken me; as if His 'mercy were clean gone forever;' not because He was changed, but because I was so heartless and cold, and alienated from Him. I have indeed been much indisposed

from similar weakness and disorder as troubled me twelve months ago ; and I find that when the consolations of the Lord are most needful in illness and infirmity of body, they are hardest to seek ; though the heart is alarmed, and the conscience clamorous, the spirit is weak, and the tempter has a tenfold power to dismay and cast down the sinner, who either has not known the Saviour, or having known Him, has lost his confidence in Him. I am a very forlorn being in many, many respects. Since I left the Brethren I have never dared to join myself with any other communion of Christians, and I want fellowship of this kind more than in any other way. With Calvinists and Methodists I frequently do associate, but I have not perfect freedom with either. Good men of both sects show me much love and kindness ; and I cannot help feeling that in their charity they greatly overvalue me, and treat me in a way that makes me little indeed in my own eyes in proportion as I appear excellent in theirs. At the same time I lose many blessings, which can only be enjoyed in Christian communion ; and my soul is starved for want of these. When we meet, we will talk more unreservedly on this subject than we have ever yet done, if I can find grace to open my lips upon it. . . . Remember me very kindly to Henry [Steinhaur]. God, our Saviour, bless and comfort you ; and may John James be all to you that both Henrietta and he were before ! Farewell."

Unwilling longer to remain without the pale of some visible communion, and conscious of a growing want for the peculiar privileges of a church fellowship, he determined to seek reâdmission into the Moravian congregation at Fulneck ; and on his forty-third birth-day wrote to the presiding minister to that effect.

“I will not delay informing you,” was the cordial response of the good father, “that in our Elders’ Conference to-day, our Saviour approved of your being now admitted a member of the Brethren’s church. I cordially rejoice in this, and present my best wishes, united with those of my fellow-laborers, to you on this occasion. Return, then, my dear brother, with your whole heart, to the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul, inasmuch as he has manifested himself peculiarly as the Head and Ruler of the Brethren’s unity—return to that fold in which your dear late father lived and died, which counts a brother of yours among its useful ministers, and in the midst of which you enjoyed, in the period of early youth, spiritual blessings such as you probably have not forgotten. Our faith you know; the Bible we acknowledge as our only rule of doctrine and Christian practice; and our constitutional regulations, which form a brotherly agreement among ourselves, you are not unacquainted with. More particularly we may perhaps treat of these things, when we shall see you here. Renew your vows of love to our crucified, now glorified Redeemer, and may he preserve you blameless in the bundle of life until the day of his coming!”

His feelings on the occasion are thus described to Ignatius:

“On my birth-day (November 4), after many delays, and misgivings, and repentings, I wrote to Fulneck for admission into the Brethren’s congregation; and on Tuesday, December 6, the lot fell to me in that pleasant place, and on Sunday last I was publicly invested with my title to that goodly heritage. The dreadfully tempestuous weather, and severe indisposition from a cold, prevented me from being personally present when the congregation acknowledged me as one of her members, and recommended me

with prayer and thanksgiving to Him who is especially her Head and Elder. To him and to his people I have again devoted myself, and may he make me faithful to my covenant with him, as I know he will be faithful to his covenant with me! Rejoice with me, my dearest friends, for this unspeakable privilege bestowed on so unworthy and ungrateful a prodigal as I have been. Tell all the good brethren and sisters whom I knew at Bristol, this great thing which the Lord hath done unto me. O, how glad shall I be at some future time to be preserved in life by his merciful care to meet as one of them in your chapel!"

Or more naturally do they flow in the beautiful lines of the hymn:

"People of the living God,
I have sought the world around,
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found.
Now to you my spirit turns—
Turns, a fugitive unblest;
Brethren, where your altar burns,
Oh, receive me into rest.

"Lonely I no longer roam,
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave.
Mine the God whom you adore;
Your Redeemer shall be mine;
Earth can fill my heart no more—
Every idol I resign."

This step had a visible influence upon Montgomery's character: it defined his future course; brought the discordant elements of his life into harmony; gave strength

and tone to his influence ; and in the growing graces of Christian experience, he found that peace and comfort which the world had so signally failed to give him.

Immediately he entered upon a life of active service in his Master's cause ; and he found God's gifts only enjoyed—

“ When used as talents lent ;
Those talents only well employed,
When in his service spent.”

The Sunday-school cause he warmly espoused. Besides more general labors in its behalf, he entered the Red Hill Sunday-school, under the charge of the Methodists, as a teacher, where his faithful and affectionate counsels, “armed by faith and winged by prayer,” were greatly blest.

Nor were his teachings confined to Red Hill ; for his sweet Sabbath-school hymns are sung every Sabbath in this country and old England, in all those precious nurseries of the church, where

“ Children of the King of kings
Are training for the skies.”

The autumn of one year, Montgomery, with Mr. Bennett, visited forty schools in the embrace of the Sheffield Sunday-school Union, the report of which, drawn up by the poet, shows if “the *world* could never give the bliss for which he sighed,” a foretaste of it was found in the Master's work.

“On many, on all,” says the writer, “of these pleasant Sabbath-days' journeys, He who walked unknown with the two disciples to Emmaus accompanied us, not, we trust, unknown, though unseen ; and while He communed with

our spirits and opened the Scriptures, in the fulfilment of their prophecies concerning Himself at this period by the way, we felt our hearts burn within us, till we could declare from experience, in his own memorable words—‘Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed.’ . . . In these Sabbath walks, while we enlarged our knowledge of the adjacent district, its mountains and valleys, its tracts of waste and cultivation, its woods, its waters, and its inhabited places, till every hamlet was endeared to our remembrance by some particular and delightful associations, we were more and more deeply impressed with the utility and necessity of Sunday-schools. . . . We observed that in every neighborhood where the Gospel was preached [mostly by itinerants] if a school was established first, a chapel soon arose within its inclosure, or at its side; and where the chapel [or the church] it might now be added first appeared, the Sunday-school followed as its necessary accompaniment.”

CHAPTER XII.

LETTER FROM SOUTHEY — SARAH GALES'S DEPARTURE FROM ENGLAND —
LOTTERY ADVERTISEMENTS — APPEAL FOR MORAVIAN MISSIONS IN
GREENLAND — LITERARY PROFITS — DEATH OF ELIZABETH GALES —
DEPUTATION OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY — DEPARTURE OF
GEORGE BENNETT — CORRESPONDENCE — MANIFOLD LABORS — "DAISY
IN INDIA" — CALL FROM SOUTHEY — LABORS FOR THE CHIMNEY-
SWEEPS — AN AMERICAN GENTLEMAN AT HART'S-HEAD.

"THE first thing I have to say," writes Southey, under date of May 29, 1815, "relates to Wordsworth. I put into his hands your review of the 'Excursion,' and he desired me to tell you how much he was gratified by it, — by the full and liberal praise which it accorded him, — by the ability and discrimination which were shown; but, above all, by the spirit which it breathed, which is so unlike the prevailing tone of criticism.

"Secondly, — but first in importance, — now that the fine season is arrived, will you fulfill in summer the purpose which was frustrated in autumn, and come to visit me? Neither you nor I need be reminded of the uncertainty of life; we are now neither of us young men, and if we suffer year after year to pass by, we may, perhaps, never know each other in the body. I want to have the outward and visible Montgomery in my mind's eye — the form and tangible image of my friend. Come, and come speedily. There is a coach from Leeds to Kendal, and one from Ken-

dal here. Write, and fix the time for coming. Wordsworth, who is now in London, will probably be home in about a fortnight, and both he and Lloyd (with whom you will be much interested) are very desirous of seeing you.

“The apprehensions under which you last wrote are fully confirmed, and Europe is once more involved in war by the ambition of a single individual, whom I verily believe to have accumulated a heavier load of guilt upon his soul than any human being ever did before him. I am sorry to see the Jacobins act with him; for I would fain have believed, that, with all their dreadful errors, they set out with a noble principle; but they are now proving that their only impulse at present is a feeling of personal hatred to the Bourbons, which Louis XVIII. is far from deserving. I look to the war with anxiety, but not with fear; on our part it is so just, so called for by every proper feeling and sound principle, that nothing can oppose it, except that vile infatuation which has made a few persons cling to Bonaparte through all his crimes.

“I thought you would be pleased with the party whom I directed to you in the autumn. . . . The sale of ‘Roderick’ has exceeded my expectations; a third edition is going to press. I have seen no review of it, but can perceive more faults than the most malicious critic will point out; and I have a happy indifference to criticism, which proceeds, I suppose, as much from temperament as philosophy. Write and tell me when you will come. Remember me to Mr. Gilbert when you see him. I shall rejoice to see him again. God bless you.”

Twenty years having elapsed since the flight of Mr. Gales to the United States, Sarah, the younger of his three sisters, decided to cross the waters and visit her brother at Washington.

Montgomery accompanied her to Liverpool, and on being asked, after her departure, how he felt, replied, "As happy as despair can make me." The answer suggested a love beyond a brother's, — yet it is believed nothing existed but the most cordial fraternal affection; and, as brother and sister they formed a pleasant household until death divided them.

An increasing serenity we perceive stealing over his mind. Called to feel some pecuniary embarrassment, in consequence of an unfaithful partner, he tells us: "Any suffering, of mind or body, I have long ago learnt is preferable to the anguish of a wounded conscience; and, while I can keep myself clear of this evil in secular affairs, I ought to bear any other affliction with patience, yea, with grateful resignation to the will of Him who is wiser, and better, and kinder than any earthly friend could be to me, and therefore to whom, and to whose disposal, I may with confidence entrust all that I have, and all that I am."

No man, indeed, was more prompt to sacrifice pecuniary considerations to moral conviction, when they were in conflict, than Montgomery.

That the lottery system was nothing more or less than legalized gambling, had already forced itself upon thinking men, and Montgomery, as we have seen, had himself relinquished the sale of tickets at his office. But this was only cutting off the left hand of a profitable sin, while with the right he was still accepting the hire of iniquity. The best support of the *Iris* accrued from lottery advertisements; indeed it might seem questionable if the paper could be maintained at all without the generous pay which came in from this source.

Mr. Roberts had long waged war upon this evil, and being now determined to attack the state lottery, a re-

venue recruiting business, he was anxious to enlist the *Iris* fully in the cause. The glaring inconsistency of such a course, its editor keenly felt. "Renounce all connection with the accursed thing!" exclaimed his friend.

"The counsel was hard to a person in my circumstances," the poor editor tells us; "conscience and cupidity had a sharp conflict; but the battle was not a drawn one; the better principle prevailed, and after the autumn of 1816, I never admitted another lottery advertisement into my paper. Nor did I ever for one moment repent the sacrifice."

Thus unfettered, the *Iris* took a leading stand in holding up the system to public reprobation. Both pamphlets and poetry issued from his press, aimed chiefly against those ministers and their supporters in Parliament who persisted in resorting to this means for raising public money. Mr. Roberts wrote a satirical poem, and Montgomery *Some Thoughts on Wheels*, both of which had the celebrity of fitness at the time. A petition to Parliament from Sheffield was also gotten up through their influence; and their indefatigable zeal contributed much towards the removal of the "greatest plague that ever infested the country in the shape of a tax upon the poverty, the morals, and the happiness of the people."

The state lottery was relinquished in 1824.

As for the *Iris*, we do not learn that its existence was at all jeopardized by its manliness. Not the first or last instance, when taking counsel of our conscience has proved better than our fears.

In 1818, great destitution prevailed among the Moravian missions in Greenland, which called forth an earnest appeal in their behalf in the columns of the *Iris*. The working missionaries of this inhospitable country, if they endured severe privations for the Gospel's sake, reaped

also a precious harvest from its icy slopes. The simple piety of the Greenlanders makes a shining record in the annals of the church. Although there were no Moravian congregations in or around the immediate vicinity of Sheffield, there were warm Christian hearts which responded to Montgomery's call, and in a few weeks nearly £130, with a great variety of clothing and other useful articles, flowed into his hands.

"These gifts," said he, "have been altogether voluntary, in the best sense of the term. The purest produce of the olive is the oil which distills freely from the gentlest pressure of its fruit; the most precious juice of the grape is that which flows from the thick cluster, heaped abundantly together, without any other compulsion than their own ripe weight and bursting fulness. The wine and oil which the '*dear English people*' have thus poured into the wounds of the poor Greenlanders, perishing by the way-side, are the purest and most precious of their kind."

"Thank you for the *Iris*," writes Southey. "I enclose a one pound bill (more according to my means than my will) for the poor Greenlanders, and I will endeavor to do them better service by sketching — if I am permitted — a history of the mission in the Quarterly Review. I have Egede and Crantz at hand, and will write for the periodical accounts. I have frequent cause to regret that the first volumes of these most interesting records are not to be procured.

"It is very long since I have written you; forgive me and tell me so soon. I am closely employed, and, as usual, upon many things. A work which interests me greatly at present is the '*Life of Wesley*,' upon such a scale as to comprise the history of Methodism abroad and at home, with no inconsiderable part of the religious history of this country for the last hundred years. You know

enough of my intellectual habits to know my love of pursuing a subject in its ramifications. Just at this time I am drawing up a succinct account of the origin and economy of the establishment of Herrnhut — a necessary part of that chapter which is entitled ‘Wesley in Germany.’ No part of Wesley’s conduct is so little creditable to him as that which relates to the Moravians. At first he submitted himself to them in a manner unworthy of his understanding — as in the affair of his intended marriage with Sophia Cowston; and still more with regard to William Law; and when he separated from them, he did not for a long time render them common justice; but even in some degree sanctioned the abominable calumnies with which they were assailed. He became wiser and more charitable as he grew older. I have traced the progress of his mind with great care throughout his writings: he outgrew all his extravagances; but it was not easy to disown them all.

“Is there no hope of tempting you into this country? Spring is coming on, and you would render me a bodily service by drawing me away from the desk and the fire-side to the mountain valleys and the hill-tops. I am not a man to make insincere professions: it would give me a heartfelt pleasure to see you here. The Leeds coach runs to Kendal, and from Kendal there is a morning stage every day to Keswick. Come and see me, Montgomery, that we may talk together of this world and the next.”

Montgomery’s present interest in behalf of the mission quickened into life the long dormant plan of a poem, located in those ice-bound regions; and in the spring of 1819 appeared *Greenland*, emphatically a missionary poem, embalming the memory of the devoted men who

“Planted successfully sweet Sharon’s rose
On icy plains and in eternal snows.”

“There never was an age,” he says, “in which more good poetry was written than the present, or in which poetical talent was better rewarded by its true patrons, the *readers* of poetry; but this very circumstance renders it exceedingly difficult to command attention and secure admiration. Byron and Moore—to say nothing of Scott, Wordsworth and Campbell—carry all before them; and I am not disposed to quarrel with them or the public that I am left so far behind in talent and popularity; though I cannot read the works of either without lamenting the general character of their poetry. If they are always as beautiful, they are sometimes as terrible, as the serpent that beguiled Eve. Byron, indeed, is no man, as men are now-a-days—he is one of Nature’s prodigious births; and more original, powerful, and sweet, with all his wildness and barbarism, and dissonance, than all his living brethren put together; and among the dead I can find nothing like him, though a few may be equal, or superior, taking them all in all.”

Montgomery certainly had no reason to be dissatisfied with *his* share of literary profit; for we learn up to this time that, besides owning the copyright of his poems, he had received £1,600 from Longman & Co., with good reason to expect that his new volume would in two years yield him from £300 to £400, and £100 yearly for some time afterwards.

Weeks, months, and years pass by, filled with wholesome industries. Editor and author, an active citizen, ready to interest himself in everything which can promote the welfare of his town; a judicious friend to the poor; an earnest co-laborer in many of the beneficial enterprises of the day, his life was one of increasing usefulness and happiness.

Sanatory reforms he bravely battled for; public events

he impartially noticed ; while all along his path little poems, like way-side flowers, are springing, commemorative of the loves, and joys, and falling tears which meet him on the road.

Writing to his brother Ignatius, he says :

“At this time of the year I am full of employment with Bible, Missionary, Tract, and Sunday-school Societies, which seem rather to belong to a minister of the Gospel than a printer and a poet : my tongue and my pen have continual engagements to meet. I feel at home and happy in the work, though frequently the flesh is weak when the spirit is most willing ; and whatever temptations I may have to vanity, —and with such I am surrounded, —besides the traitor within my bosom, like Satan at the ear of Eve, sometimes suggesting presumptuous and sometimes desponding thoughts of myself, I have trials and experience both from without and within enough to humble me every day, and every hour of every day, especially when I am in most danger of growing giddy and proud. In Passion week I went to Fulneck, and enjoyed the holy communion on the anniversary of that night on which our Lord was betrayed. It was a blessed season, because it was a heart-searching one ; Good Friday also was made exceedingly sweet and solemn to my soul, though I staggered sometimes in bearing the cross up the rugged steep of Calvary ; but I was borne up by the right hand of Him whom I accompanied there.”

He seemed, indeed, striving to carry out the spirit of his soul-stirring hymn :

“Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand ;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broad-cast it o'er the land.

“Beside all waters sow,
The highway furrows stock;
Drop it where thorns and thistles grow,
Scatter it on the rock.”

In February, 1821, occurred the first breach in the family circle, of which, for thirty years, he had formed a part. Elizabeth Gales was not, for God took her. “Soft be the turf on thy dear breast,” is the mournful plaint of the poet-brother. But affection, winging beyond and above the grave, exclaims:

“No — *live* while those who love thee live,
The sainted sister of our heart;
And thought to thee a form shall give
Of all thou wast, and all thou art: —
Of all thou *wast*, when from thine eyes
The latest beams of kindness shone;
Of all thou *art*, when faith descries
Thy spirit bowed before the throne.”

“This day I have experienced another bereavement,” he writes to a friend. “My dear and honored friend, Mr. George Bennett, left Sheffield, on his proposed visit to Otaheite and other islands in the South Seas, whence, *if* restored to us, he cannot be expected to return in less than four or five years at the earliest. What may happen to him or to us in that long period — long to look forward, though but like as many days to look backward — who can foresee, when we know not what an hour may bring forth? To be prepared at every moment to meet our God is man’s highest wisdom. May He in whose hands are the hearts of all men, so rule and influence ours, that we all, whether at Scarborough, at Sheffield, or at Otaheite, may be found,

when He comes, watching unto prayer! Then shall it be well with us here, and well with us hereafter."

The London Missionary Society, now nearly twenty-five years in vigorous operation, wished to send a deputation to visit their more important stations, particularly those among the South Sea Islands. Fit men for such an embassy, the directors had long been seeking. At length, George Bennett, Esq., Montgomery's intimate friend, offered his services, which were gladly accepted, and with him was associated Rev. Daniel Tyreman, minister of an Independent Chapel in the Isle of Wight.

Montgomery's "one word of advice" on the occasion, so seasonable to nip in the bud too sanguine hopes, with their bitter fruit, we let drop on these pages:

"Be determined, my friend, through grace, *not to be offended at small things*, and *not to despise small things*. Remember that you are not going to *build*, but to *plant*. Do not expect then to see great effects produced under your eye."

The departure of his friend from Sheffield deeply affected him, and the susceptibility of his soul for the tenderest emotions of friendship are affectingly revealed in the following letter:

"Fulneck, near Leeds, April 2, 1821.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I write to you from this place, lest I should have no other opportunity of communicating with you before you leave this country. I must, however, be brief. Your affectionate letter, written on the Friday after you left Sheffield, did not reach me till last Wednesday. Into all your painful yet transporting feelings on quitting the place of your birth, and where the Lord for so many

years both blessed you and made you a blessing, I entered with deep and lively emotion. Of all who have suffered loss, and loss not soon to be replaced, by your departure, mine must be the greatest bereavement, so far as refers to the intercommunion of personal friendship, and, on my part, the frequent and inestimable tokens of kindness which you were wont to bestow upon me, unworthy as I may have been of your distinguishing favor, and little as it was in my power to offer in return, except the grateful acceptance of your good offices. The Lord, who put it into your heart and your power thus to benefit me, Himself reward you for having been, in this respect at least, a faithful steward of what He committed to you for my profit. He now sends you forth to his servants among the heathen, — yea, to the heathen themselves, — with your hands laden, with the fruits of his love in your heart, to dispense to them, as you have done to me and thousands in this land, his own gifts. May He keep you as diligent and upright, and humble and persevering, with all faith, and hope, and charity, whither you are going, as where you have been! and may not only the living in the uttermost parts of the earth, but generations unborn, rise up to call you blessed — blessed of the Lord, — for to Him give all the glory! — with as much reason as I do at this day, and as I shall do when I meet you at the judgment seat of Christ! Meet you *there!* Yes, indeed, *there* we shall meet; may it be on his right hand, — or, if I fail, there may we be parted for ever, and you go into life eternal! But of such a separation who can think without fear and trembling? *It need not be*, I know *it need not be*; then daily let us pray that it *may not be*. The text which I twice opened at Wincobank, when we were last there, often recurs to

my mind :— ‘ Watch, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man ! ’ Let this text be a mutual watchword between you and me ; let us often meet in this passage of Scripture, and, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, let us secure this evidence to ourselves, that we *do* love Him, by keeping this his commandment. I intended that this letter should only be from my head, and consist of a few dry lines of remark, or common-place matters ; but my heart, which seemed a sealed-up fountain when I began, has broken out from its fullness, and overflowed the greater part of my paper. The communication, busy as you are, will not be less welcome on that account.

“ But I must notice a few points of business. I have discharged the bill at Mr. Carver’s : he expressed himself very kindly respecting you ; and, indeed, the very bricks in the walls, and the stones in the streets of Sheffield seem affected by your removal, and wish you well, — or would do so, if they could wish anything.”

On May 22d, 1821, the deputation sailed from Gravesend, in a South Sea whaler, for their long and responsible voyage round the world. Montgomery expresses his mingled emotions to his friend in verse, the key-note of which is :

“ There is a feeling in the heart,
That will not let thee go ;
Yet go — thy spirit stays with me ;
Yet go — my spirit goes with thee.”

Chronicling events from his own pen, he writes to a dear niece who visited him :

“By the return of Miss Gales, our family is, as it must be a little while longer; and unless you return, or Harriet comes, it is not likely to change till there be one less, and then another, and then another, and then there will be none! Long after that, may you and your sister be healthy, and happy, and on your way to heaven.”

Another letter to his friend Bennett:

“Sheffield, June 16, 1821.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I do not know where this will meet you, or when; but understanding that Mr. M'Coy will have an early opportunity of forwarding letters to Port Jackson, I will embark on this sheet of paper in great haste I assure you, and make as good speed as I can, that while you are sailing half round the world to the west, I, by sailing half round it in the contrary direction, may meet you on the shores of Otaheite—if not face to face—hand to hand, and heart to heart. In a far country, the least thing that reminds us of our own, awakens in a moment a thousand endeared associations; and if home-sickness comes over the spirit, too exquisitely touched, the anguish soon throbs itself into composure, or is exalted into ‘the joy of grief.’ One of the last incidents before we parted has often recurred to my mind. You committed to my care a letter which you had borrowed from a botanical friend, and which had been written to him by the Rev. Dr. Carey of Serampore. In that letter he mentions that a common field daisy had unexpectedly sprung up in his garden, out of a quantity of English earth in which the seeds of other plants had been transported to India. With this playmate of his infancy, and companion of his youth—for such the daisy is to all of us who have had the happiness to be born

in the fields of our native land, instead of its cities—he had been so charmed, that from year to year he had trained a succession of seedlings to remind him of what he had loved and left at home. Now, though this letter of mine may be as insignificant in itself as a daisy appears among millions of its own and a thousand other species of flowers, to a supercilious eye in England, yet to you the handwriting on the direction I know will be as welcome as the phenomenon of the daisy in India to good Dr. Carey. I have little to say, and am so pressed with troubles and duties (the former grievously aggravated by the perpetual neglect of the latter), that I am fairly writing by stealth, from a crowd of more importunate obligations, which are dunning and mobbing me on every side. Alas! the prodigal of time—and the procrastinator is the greatest spendthrift of that most invaluable treasure—must always live in this kind of tribulation. I am too old to mend, I fear—nay, I despair of doing so—and yet I must, or I may fail at last in what is of more importance than all the world to me, as one whose day is far spent, with whom the evening of life is closing in deeper shadows every hour, and whom the unbroken night or the unsetting glory of eternity will soon surround forever and forever. Nothing of particular interest has occurred among your connections here, except what we all expected, but the inconvenience of which we could not otherwise than by experience know. We are continually reminded of our bereavement by your departure: in the social circle your chair is empty; your face is not seen in the sanctuary, and at our public meetings, the place which you occupied is filled by others, but not as you filled it. Repeatedly, on anniversary occasions, you have been remembered, not only in our hearts, but with our tongues we have testified how sincerely we loved

you, and how deeply, for your own sake, we deplore your removal. I may name especially — because you will be pleased to be thereby transported in spirit to the scenes in which you have often been engaged with your friends here, in holy and delightful, as well as benevolent and disinterested service — the Missionary Union in Queen street Chapel, on Easter Monday — the Old Women's anniversary in the Cutler's Hall, about the middle of May — the Sunday-school Union Committees, and especially the children's muster on the new burial-ground (for the last time probably, as the foundations of a church are soon to be laid there; and the dead, for ages to come, are to be assembled round its future walls) — the sermons at Carver street, Queen street, Baptist, and Independent Methodist Chapel, in the forenoon; — but, above all, in the teachers' meeting in the afternoon, on Whit-Monday. On the latter occasion I was *disabled*. I meant to have laid out my whole strength, to supply, as far as lay in my power, the loss that would be felt by your absence; but it pleased the Lord to lay his hand on me, and though I was enabled to be a partaker, I could scarcely be called a helper, of the joy of our numerous array in that glorious field.

“The wound that incapacitated me from taking a prominent part in the action had been received in the same service, however; and I ‘pursued the triumph, and partook the gale,’ as heartily as if I had been the hero of the day. On the Friday evening before the anniversary I had returned from Halifax (where the West Riding Missionary Association meeting was held this year, and where you were remembered in almost every speech), much exhausted in body, and laboring under indisposition beside; however, being willing in spirit, I went down to the committee [of S. S. U.] and read — what indeed nobody else could have

read — the report at length, compiled from matter transmitted by the town and country schools. This brought on a violent inflammation of the throat ; but I was again delivered from the miseries of a quinsy by the application of leeches to the part externally, as I had been saved in like manner a few months before. However, such were the zeal and love to the cause displayed by your old associates, that neither the lack of your service nor mine was felt, otherwise than by the kindness and partiality of friendship, to be any drawback from the enjoyment of the day. I don't remember, since the first, a more animated meeting of the Union. A resolution shall be transmitted to you, in which, beside a vote of cordial thanks for your past services, you are requested to allow your name to be recorded among us as patron for life of the S. S. Union. I ought not to forget that our friend, Mr. R. Hodgson, at the Church Missionary meeting held in the chancel of Rotherham Church a few days ago, made mention of you and your mission in such terms as delighted and affected many — or rather all — who were then present, and excited Christian sympathy in no ordinary degree in the bosoms of Churchmen, Methodists, and Dissenters, of whom the assembly was composed. At the Hathersage Bible Association, on Wednesday, I had an opportunity of pronouncing your name in ears to which it was exceedingly agreeable, but which would have been much better pleased to have heard your voice. But I must close this recapitulation.

“I know of no *mortal* change among your friends here, though you must look henceforth for the record of one or another such in every future epistle from your correspondents on this side of the mighty waters. We shall never *all* meet again as we were wont in this world ; but

there are seats prepared for us at that table to which the redeemed shall come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Ah! then, may none of us be thrust out; nor need we, unless we exclude ourselves. I duly received your letter from the Isle of Wight; and we heard of your setting sail. The Lord be with you."

The letter of Dr. Carey, one of the first Baptist missionaries to India, here referred to, contained an interesting paragraph which touched the poet's heart, and originated one of his most charming little poems, *The Daisy in India*.

"That I might be sure," ran the paragraph, "not to lose any part of your valuable present, I shook the bag over a patch of earth in a shady place: on visiting which, a few days afterwards, I found springing up, to my inexpressible delight, a *bellis perennis* of our English pastures. I know not that I ever enjoyed, since leaving Europe, a simple pleasure so exquisite as the sight of this *English* daisy afforded me; not having seen one for upwards of thirty years, and never expecting to see one again."

The Daisy in India revives the memory of early days, when scrap-books and albums caught up the little voyager to our shores, and when,

"Thrice welcome, little English flower,"

had an unspeakable charm, even to the ear and heart of childhood.

Following along in his path, we find him among the group at the laying of the corner-stone of a new church at Attercliffe, with the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Fitzwilliam,

and Earl of Surrey, the strains of *his* hymn expressing the devout utterances of the occasion.

Again, we hear him in Cutler's Hall advocating a literary association in his adopted town.

And now he is at a meeting of the Wesleyan Tract Society, paying affectionate tribute to the memory of a humble brother:

"The monthly meetings of the committee of this Tract Society, which were originally held at six o'clock in the morning, were the first *private religious* parties I ever ventured to unite with in Sheffield: but in them, I declare, in the presence of this assembly, I enjoyed the purest and most spiritual intercourse which I ever experienced among my fellow-men. For the sake of being present, I—who am so infirm, and constitutionally indolent—have many a time left my warm bed on a cold winter's morning: but let the weather be as cold as it would, our hearts were sure to be warmed in the meeting. It was there, in that corner [pointing to a particular part of the chapel, then boarded off as a vestry] I first saw Samuel Hill. He was at that time a very poor man—so poor, indeed, that I recollect he could not always afford to pay his subscription of six shillings a year; but he was rich in faith, ripe in religious experience, and mighty in prayer: I declare before you all, that I never stood in the presence of *any* man with such trembling as I used to feel beside that humble individual. Good God, I thought, Thou hast given to that man, perhaps, only one talent; but how does he use it! Surely, the responsibility of some of us, who believe ourselves more largely endowed, but are not bringing forth even similar fruits, will be awful indeed."

"I have too much upon my mind to do anything well," he writes to Aston, "or, indeed, anything in the right

time, which is half of well-doing at least. You may think that I forget you, because I so seldom tell you on paper that I remember you both with gratitude and esteem for many kindnesses shown to me, especially in former days: but the truth is, that my letter-writing age is gone by — never to return, unless youth, the season for correspondence, comes back again. *That*, however, cannot be; childhood, I believe, does sometimes pay a second visit to man — *youth never*. The heart, however, when it is right, is always young, and knows neither decay nor coolness; I cannot boast of mine in other respects; but assuredly, in the integrity of its affections it has not grown a moment older these five-and-twenty years.

In November, 1822, Southey, on a visit to Doncaster with his daughter, made a flying call at Sheffield, and sent for Montgomery to meet him at the Tontine. It was their first meeting, and cordial and heart-warming we believe it was, as became two frank and generous natures. Ebenezer Elliot was also there, and Mr. Everett, Southey's old antagonist in his Methodist controversy. We cannot help wishing something more was left of the interview than its simple record.

He again writes Mr. Bennett:

“Sheffield, February 6, 1823.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I have only as much time as I can hold in my hand, while it evaporates like ether, to say to you, as I do with my whole heart, ‘The Lord bless, and preserve, and bring you home again!’ Mr. Rowland Hodgson, I understand, has written to you from Devonshire; I have nothing to enclose from any of your friends here, but what I may send, even without asking their leave to do so, — their best

wishes and prayers for you, all in consonance with what I have already expressed on my own part. I seem to follow you time after time, and letter by letter, as if you were going further and further from me, and rather advancing on a mission through the solar system, than located for awhile at the antipodes. I am always glad to hear of you, from whatever quarter the intelligence may come; but I cannot help also desiring to hear *from you* once, at least, while you sojourn at the 'green earth's remotest verge.' Can you believe it yourself, that *I* have never received a line nor a word from you since you passed the equator? You did not plunge my memory into the fathomless abyss there, nor leave it on this side, because you have mentioned my name with all your wonted kindness to some of our mutual friends. Of this I will not complain;—it has so happened; but I cannot help sometimes repining a little that it has not happened otherwise. I am sure I have not been neglectful of you; this must be the fifth packet, as well as I can recollect, which I have despatched to you by one conveyance or another, with about as much hope of some of them reaching you, as if I had thrown so many bottles into the sea, and left them there to find their way by the drifting of currents to your Pacific islands. You will see by one of the pamphlets which I enclose, that we have just established a Literary and Philosophical Society in Sheffield. Pray remember this; and when you pick up a pebble or a weed worth presenting, do send it. We have just heard that you are recovered from the illness that afflicted you this time last year. Again, I say — God bless and keep you!"

Again :

“Sheffield, March 26, 1823.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I once more send a line of remembrance and affection to you, and I can do no more at present. Five times, at least, have I forwarded parcels by various opportunities ; and such is the uncertainty or the delay of communications to the South Seas, that it seems, by your last letter to Mr. Hodgson from the Sandwich Islands, that you had not received one of these in August last. Long before now, I hope that on your return to Tahiti you would meet with a month’s reading almost from Sheffield alone, which must have accumulated there during your absence, if no miscarriage has taken place in our addresses to you. I fear that yours to us have not been so fortunate. Neither Mr. Boden, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Read, nor myself, have heard from you since June, 1821. Miss Ball did receive a letter from you some time ago ; but no member of the three families above named have been so favored yet. Your letters, however, become common property in your long absence, and they travel about from eye to eye, and heart to heart, making all glad on account of your zeal, and love, and faith, and labor in the Lord’s cause, and the kind remembrances which each of us in our turn see in your own handwriting to those who are happy enough to receive letters addressed to themselves. We begin to think that *your* heart and eye must be often turned homeward ; and though we would not welcome you hither, even if it depended on our decision, one moment before you have finished the work which, treading in the steps of your Redeemer, your heavenly Father has given you to do, yet we would not have you detained one moment longer than that consummation. Farewell ! probably the last time before

your return, for how are we to follow your wanderings by sea and land, when you leave the South Seas, if you return by the East Indies, making missionary visits there? Misses Gales send kind regards."

Again he writes in a letter a few months later:

"Our inestimable friend, Mr. Rowland Hodgson, has had another sharp visitation of his inveterate complaint, which has obliged him to retire to the south of England for the winter. He has, indeed, been rendered back to us from the gate of death so frequently, that we may yet pray with confident expectation, that goodness and mercy may yet follow him through many years of a life so precious to his friends, to the Church, and to the world in our quarter, as his has hitherto been. Mr. Roberts holds on pretty stoutly, and in his peculiar way continues to do good—and a great deal, too, in one respect; for, principally by his exertions, we have raised about £320 in a few weeks for the Moravian missions."

The poor chimney-sweeps still maintain their hold on Mr. Roberts, who, fertile in resources, now proposes the publication of a little volume, a sort of "Chimney-sweepers' Album," the first part to embody all the information which had been gained in reference to their labors, and the second, in prose and verse, to illustrate their unpitied and unalleviated sufferings.

Montgomery undertook the editorship of it; and to enrich its literary department, he bespoke contributions from all the poetic celebrities of the day.

"Oh for a muse of *smoke* that would ascend
The highest chimney of invention!"

answers Moore from Sloperton Cottage, "but nothing

came that I could venture to send you, and though I ought to have written to tell you so, I *did not*, and must only trust to your good nature for forgiveness.

"It would give me great delight to meet you. There are passages of yours that I repeat to myself almost daily. If ever good luck should take me to Sheffield, I shall, on the strength of our chimney-sweep correspondence, knock at your door."

"I am much inclined to doubt," writes George Croly, "whether poetry is the proper weapon, and whether a collection of *strong cases, well authenticated* and well told, prefaced by a few pages of the history and nature of this grievance and disgrace to humanity and England, would not be the true mode of influencing the nation, and through them the legislature. I know that something of this kind has been done already, and that the House of Lords resisted the measure; but it was on the alleged ground that chimneys were so built as to make the employment of machinery dangerous. The answer that we must give to this, is the production of machinery that will clean the angles of the chimneys. Until this be done, no progress with the Lords can be expected.

"If I should find it in my power to assist your design in any form of this nature, by urging your pamphlet into notice, I shall be extremely gratified. But I confess I am fully convinced that something appealing more directly to the general understanding than poetry must be employed."

Sir Walter Scott, on being written to, says:

"Abbotsford, near Melrose, January 4, 1824.

"I am favored with your letter, and should be most happy to do what would be agreeable to Mr. Montgomery; but a veteran in literature, like a veteran in arms, loses the

alacrity with which young men start to the task; and I have been so long out of the habit of writing poetry, that my Pegasus has become very restive. Besides, at my best, I was never good at writing occasional verses."

Sir Walter, however, was not the man to content himself with a mere apology for doing nothing; and accordingly the editor says in his preface, that "he has contributed something towards this work, which will tell better in the end than even a poem from his own inimitable pen might have done." This was a description of the plan adopted in the construction of the vents of his then newly-erected residence at Abbotsford, and by which he had "taken care that no such cruelty (as that exercised in the employment of boys) shall be practised within its precincts."

Allan Cunningham accompanied a song characteristic alike of his genius and good nature, with a letter, in which he says:

"Eccleton Street, Pimlico, February, 1824.

"That I wish a full and triumphant success to your benevolent undertaking you will readily imagine; and poetry will do more for human nature in one hour than it has done for a century, if it redeems the image of God from this profanation. I am glad of this opportunity to tell you how long and how much you have gratified me with your poetry; and to assure you that you have *many, many* warm admirers among men who open books, not for the sake of telling others what they think of them, but for the delight they give — the surest proof of excellence."

Bernard Barton, Barry Cornwall, Bowring, and three or four others, contributed to the proposed volume, which

appeared in the spring of 1824, under the title of *Chimney-Sweepers' Friend and Climbing Boys' Album*, and was dedicated to the Father of all his People, King George IV., to whom a copy was transmitted.

"After talking with many literary people, when in town," says Professor Smyth, of Cambridge, "I am but confirmed in my original notion, that no good can be done in the way in which it is proposed to attempt it. Ludicrous associations have unfortunately got connected with these poor boys; and I conceive, with others, that the Muse and the Fine Arts are more likely to suffer from this sort of connection with them, than to do them service."

Mr. Proctor, however (Barry Cornwall), whose poetical contribution is one of the best in the volume, remarks, "I have dealt *plainly* with the subject, although I don't know why soot should not produce poetical as well as natural flowers." Lamb, who deemed "the subject so unmanageable in poetry," communicated, nevertheless, a very characteristic little poem from Blake's "Songs of Innocence."

The editor, also, did his share. How much actual good the little book effected, of course cannot be calculated, but the correspondence growing out of it, afforded Montgomery a cheering interlude amid graver labors.

After repeated attempts to get Parliamentary action on the subject, an act for the total discontinuance of the evil unanimously passed both Houses, we believe in 1839.

Southey writes at this time:

"Keswick, July 24, 1824.

"MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

"You wrote me a very kind and gratifying letter in November last, which I received at a time when it was not possible to answer it; for, from the time you saw me till

the middle of February, I was perpetually engaged in travelling or in society. During that course of locomotion, your circular reached me, and if I could have written anything for your well-intended volume, in any way tolerable, you should have had it. But the truth is, that, from long disuse, I have lost all facility of writing upon occasional subjects. These matters premised, now for the reason why I have neglected to write ever since: it is not a very good one, I confess, and yet, such as it is, it must be told. Before I departed from London, Longmans sent me *Prose by a Poet from an old Friend*. I meant to read it in the country, but when I packed up my boxes for exportation thither, by some accident these volumes were left behind. Meanwhile, in daily expectation of their arrival, I have waited week after week, not liking to thank you for them till I could say I had perused them with pleasure.

“My heart goes with you in your moral speculations. Such papers as those upon Old Women and Juvenile Delinquency cannot be sent into the world without producing some good. I too have been probing the wounds of society. I hope, in the course of the next season, to send you my speculations upon its progress and prospects, in a series of Colloquies, to which I have prefixed as a motto three pregnant words from St. Bernard, — *respice, aspice, prospice*. You may differ — yet not I think materially — from some of the opinions advanced there; but the general tendency and fundamental principles will have your full concurrence. I want more order, more discipline, less liberty to do ill, more encouragement, more help to do well. I want to impress both upon the rulers and the people a sense of their respective duties; for in truth we have at this time reached a more critical period in the progress

of society than history has ever before unfolded. The full effects of the discovery of printing have never been apprehended till now; the pressure of population has never till now been felt in a Christian country (I hope you know that I abhor Malthus's abominable views) — the consequences of an unlimited and illimitable creation of wealth have never before been dreamt of; and, to crown all, there is even a probability that the art of war may be made so excellently destructive as to put an end to it. How I should like to talk with you upon some of these wide-branching subjects among the mountains!"

In the month of October he went to Bridlington. Of this visit, we have a poetical memento in the *Three Sonnets* descriptive of scenes witnessed from the quay, and which appear in his collected works under the title of *A Sea Piece*. They were considered by the author as the best original poems in this form which he ever wrote. It may be interesting to mention, as illustrative of Montgomery's habit of composing while travelling, that the whole of these sonnets, with the exception of about six lines of the first, were written on the road between Bridlington and York.

December 16, 1824, he writes to Mr. Bennett:

"This packet will be tenfold welcome, because it contains remembrances from many quarters. Your letters, dated from on board the vessel which I hope has long ere now landed you in New South Wales, were lately received, and, brief as they were, none that ever reached us from the other side of the world, even under your hand and seal, were more gratefully welcomed, because the 'hope deferred,' till 'the heart' was almost 'sick' of hearing that you were actually turning your face towards the setting sun till he should become the rising sun, had made us

anxiously expect the arrival of your next communications; these, when they came, were indeed ‘a tree of life,’ and we have now begun to think that probable, which heretofore we looked upon as merely possible; namely, that we may yet see your face again in the flesh, and hear from your lips, what we always read with delight from your pen, the great things which the Lord hath done for you, and in you, and by you, since we parted. Your letters and packages, by the returned vessel from the South Seas in October last, came to hand, and were exceedingly acceptable. The share of shells and other curiosities, which were forwarded to me from London, have been distributed according to the best of my judgment among your friends here, with the consent and advice of Mr. Rowland Hodgson, Mr. Samuel Roberts, and Mr. Read, whom I consulted in everything. The artificial articles, arms, ornaments, cases, &c., &c., we deemed it best to present to *The Literary and Philosophical Society’s Museum here*, where they will be preserved entire, and always open to the public inspection. Had we divided them, they would have been of [comparatively] little value to anybody; whereas, being thus preserved and dedicated, they will be a treasure, even to posterity, with your townspeople. Mr. Rowland Hodgson is still very feeble, and leads a suffering life: he and I were together for a few weeks at Bridlington Quay, whence he wrote to you. Mr. Roberts and his family are pretty well; he writes to you by this conveyance. : . . An old and most amiable acquaintance of yours lately died at Chesterfield, full of faith, and patience, and hope that shall not be ashamed, I verily believe, — Joseph Storrs. Mr. Hodgson and I were at his house a few weeks before his end, and he seemed then calmly and delightfully undressing for the

grave, and clothing for immortality. His end was peace. Your name, I may say, is never forgotten at our anniversaries of Christian Institutions, and if not absolutely mentioned, is remembered with feelings of affection, and regret, and desire, by those who have been wont to see you leading the van in every engagement against the powers of darkness, shining in the whole armor of light. O, how glad shall we be to hail you back again, should the merciful providence of God again unite us personally in works of faith and love!"

"When you return," he again writes to Mr. Bennett, "you will with sorrow discover how much we have apostatized in many things from what you taught us, and from what we followed diligently and successfully, while you, as our master, — the greatest of all, because the servant of all, like your Redeemer, — were present with us. Oh! how welcome again will be your vigilant eye, your active mind, your generous hand, your fervent spirit! Forgive me for what seems to be praise, but is only the language of gratitude and affection from my heart. I speak thus, because *you* will give God the glory. I cannot recollect any particular local intelligence to send you at this time. My friends here, the Misses Gales, are pretty well; we often talk of you at our fireside, always with affectionate hearts, and sometimes with tearful eyes. They send their kindest regards, and benedictions, and prayers for your health, and happiness, and return. I have scarcely anything new to send you in print, except a copy of 'Cowper's Poems,' to which the prefatory essay is my composition. Of this I beg your acceptance, as another small token of my gratitude and esteem for many invaluable acts of kindness shown to me while you lived here, and for every one of which I am happy to remain your debtor till death."

In July, 1825, Mr. Carter, of New York, travelling in England, paid the poet a visit, and on his return, gratified the American public with a description of the bard and his surroundings.

The neat sitting-room, and the affable sisterhood; the expressive countenance, gentle manners, and delightful conversation of the host, all conspired to make an evening at Hartshead one of the pleasantest in the traveller's wanderings. Nor should pussy be left out of this family scene, fondly purring at her master's feet, or coyly leaping on his knee to receive her share of tea and toast. Nor should it be concealed that the grave poet in lighter moods indited an epistle for his feline pet to a little girl, its sometime playmate. Whether this deserves a place in these sober annals, nobody but Grimalkin's friends would be generous judges of.

"Hartshead, near the Hole-in-the-Wall, July 23, 1825.

"HARRRRRRR,

"*Mew, wew, auw, mauw, hee, wee, miaow, waw, wurr, whirr, ghurr, wew, chew, issssss, tz, tz, tz, purrrurrurr,*" &c.

DONE INTO ENGLISH :

"HARRIET,

"This comes to tell you that I am very well, and I hope you are so too. I am growing a great cat; pray how do you come on? I wish you were here to carry me about as you used to do, and I would scratch you to some purpose, for I can do this much better than I could while you were here. I have not run away yet, but I believe I shall soon, for I find my feet are too many for my head, and often carry me into mischief. Love to Sheffieldina, though

I was always fit to pull her cap when I saw you petting her. My cross old mother sends her love to you—she shows me very little now-a-days, I assure you, so I do not care what she does with the rest. She has brought me a mouse or two, and I caught one myself last night, but it was in my dream, and I awoke as hungry as a hunter, and fell to biting at my tail, which I believe I should have eaten up, but it would not let me catch it. So no more at present from

“TINY.

“P. S.—I forgot to tell you that I can beg, but I like better to steal—it’s more natural, you know.

“Harriet at Ockbrook.”

CHAPTER XIII.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE "IRIS"—REMINISCENCES—PUBLIC DINNER—
TOKENS OF RESPECT—CHRISTIAN PSALMIST—SENTIMENTS ON HYM-
NOLOGY—LETTER TO MR. BENNETT—"THE STRANGER AND HIS
FRIEND"—TOUR—"PELICAN ISLAND"—ANTI-SLAVERY MEETINGS—
MRS. HEMANS—ROBERT MONTGOMERY—LETTERS FROM SOUTHEY—
VISIT TO KESWICK.

THE duties of editorship grew more and more distasteful to Montgomery. Personal politics he hated; the political principles of the parties with which he most naturally sympathised were often allied to measures which he could not approve; and, as for going with a party "right or wrong," a popular political maxim which has throttled many a conscientious scruple, and runs up heavy liabilities on the great day of reckoning, Montgomery never did. He loved the approbation of his fellows, as what man does not? collisions of all sorts rasped upon his sensitive nature; but he was an independent and fearless thinker, and never truckled to party measures, great names, or his own pockets.

But now that his purse had reinforcements from other sources, for something had accumulated from the sale of his books, and a yearly income was accruing from them, he more than ever wished to dispose of his newspaper, and give himself altogether to pursuits more congenial to his taste and temper.

An opportunity offered at this time, which his judgment determined him to accept, and in September, 1825, the *Iris* passed into the hands of its new proprietor, Mr. Blackwell, a Methodist preacher, whose failing health compelled him to quit the pulpit for the printing-office.

His farewell address commended itself to his townsfolks, and fewer slurs were probably cast upon its truthfulness than often happens to the last testaments of retiring editors.

Referring to his principles of action he says :

"From the first moment that I became the director of a public journal, I took my own ground. I have stood upon it through many years of changes, and I rest by it this day, as having afforded me a shelter through the far greater portion of my life, and yet offering me a grave, when I shall no longer have a part in anything done under the sun. And this was my ground—a plain determination, come wind or sun, come fire or flood, to do what was right. I lay stress on the purpose, not the performance, for this was the polar star to which my compass pointed, though with considerable 'variation of the needle.' " . . .

He thus winds up his retrospect :

"At the close of 1805 ended the romance of my public life. The last twenty years have brought their cares and their trials, but these have been of the ordinary kind—not always the better to bear on that account. On a review of them, I can affirm that I have endeavored, according to my knowledge and ability, to serve my townspeople and my country, with as little regard to the fear or favor of party men as personal infirmity would admit. From the beginning I have been no favorite with such characters. By the 'Aristocrats' I was persecuted, and abandoned by the 'Jacobins.' I have found nearly as little grace in the

sight of the milder representatives of these two defunct classes in later times ; yet, if either has cause to complain, it is that I have occasionally taken part with the other — a presumptive proof of my impartiality. Whatever charge of indecision may be brought against me by those who *will* only see one side of everything, while I am often puzzled by seeing so many as hardly to be able to make out the shape of the object — it cannot be denied, that on the most important questions which have exercised the understandings or the sympathies of the people of England, I have never flinched from declaring my own sentiments, at the sacrifice both of popularity and interest. If I have not done all the good which I might, and which I ought, I have rejected many opportunities of doing mischief — a negative merit, which sometimes costs no small self-denial to the editor of a public journal. While I quit a painful responsibility in laying down my office, I am sensible that I resign the possession of great power and influence in the neighborhood. These I cannot have exercised through so many years, without having made the character of my townspeople something different from what it would have been at this day had I never come among them. Whether they are better or worse for my existence here, they themselves are the right judges. This I can affirm, that I have perseveringly sought the peace of the city wherein I was led as an exile to dwell ; and never neglected an occasion to promote the social, moral, and intellectual improvement of its inhabitants. Nor in retirement can I forget, that the same duty I still owe them.”

Though to a friend he playfully tells how miserable both he and the cat were with the noise, dust and confusion of breaking up the printing-office, the relinquishment of his editorial duties seems to have given him unfeigned gratifi-

cation. Never were old habits and haunts abandoned with less real or sentimental regret.

"I have never repented of it for one moment," he says. "I am thankful, inexpressibly thankful, to that gracious Providence, which thus released me from a burthen which I could scarcely bear any longer. Of course, I am not rich — I never took the means of being so. I have often said I could not afford to pay the price of wealth, and as there is neither a Law of Nations or an Act of Parliament to compel me to become rich, I would not sell my peace of mind, nor consume my time in getting what I might never enjoy. I do not despise money; I love it as much as any man ought to do, and perhaps something more at particular times; but a small provision is enough for my few wants, and the Lord has made that provision for me. I owe it all to Him; I cannot say that my skill, or industry, or merit of any kind has acquired it; I have received it as a free gift at his hands, and to Him I would consecrate it, and every other talent."

Montgomery's retirement from the editorial chair was celebrated by a public dinner, an occasion for his friends and fellow-townsmen to express their high regard for his worth and talents.

On the 4th of November, the poet's fifty-fourth birthday, a hundred and sixteen gentlemen sat down at the Tontine Inn, to do him honor over roast beef, and to pay a deserving tribute to manly and high-toned Christian citizenship.

"I looked forward to this day," he said to his friends, "with mingled terror and delight. The terror has departed, but the delight will long remain."

Other congratulations of a more serious tone were borne to him.

“In former times,” writes a faithful preacher, “you were made to feel the bitterness of affliction, and you have frequently had to drink, in secret, from the cup of sorrow; but this is a chord I have no right to touch; it is the sanctuary into which I must not enter. And I shall only remind you, that while you were thus tried, your heavenly Father has been employed in polishing one of his precious jewels against that day when He will make it up, with millions more, and give it a place in the mediatorial crown of the Redeemer. I know, my dear friend, that to your heart this is the noblest and most desirable consummation that eternity itself can reveal. All the afflictive circumstances of your life have been brought about by infinite wisdom, and with the most benign intentions. But why should I write in this strain, when your cup of felicity is running over? I have contemplated the honors with which you have been arrayed as the fruits of a victory, a glorious victory, in which the whole Christian world should participate. It is the triumph of truth, and virtue, and piety, over error, and vice, and impiety. Your muse has been persecuted for righteousness’ sake; and after having passed through much tribulation, she now appears, like the saints before the throne, clothed in white raiment, and holding in her hand the emblematic palm. . . . A voice from the throne of the Eternal is heard, saying, ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.’ This is in reserve for you, and will infinitely surpass all the honor that comes from man. My feeble but sincere prayers are daily offered up on your behalf, that you may possess all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Released from the urgent and ever recurring duties of a journalist, Montgomery had more time for those “minis-

tries of mercy" which marked his later life, and which gave him so strong a hold upon the sympathies and affections of the Christian public.

While gentlemen ate to the poet's honor, woman embodied her respect in a more permanent and significant memorial. A beautiful inkstand, of Sheffield workmanship, was presented to him, and a thousand dollars were raised to found and support a Moravian mission, to be called by his name, and located in Tobago, where his parents labored forty years before.

"Montgomery" is a station blessed by the God of grace. Its congregations this day number 1,400 adults, and, including the schools, as many children.

A letter to an old friend discloses an abatement of the fervors of youth, with little relaxation from its pressing engagements:

"I have as little deserved that you should suppose I was offended at you, as you have deserved that I should take offence. My only fault, it seems, is my silence; *that* can soon be explained—whether it can be justified, is another question. Well, then, you have only just the same complaint to make against me, that every other friend I have in the world may make. When I am absent, I never write a letter that I can fairly avoid now-a-days; because, in truth, I am oppressed and harassed with miscellaneous correspondence which I *cannot* escape, and which is often accompanied by such tasks for my mind, that my eye recoils and my hand shrinks instinctively from a blank sheet of letter paper; and nothing can exceed the repugnance with which I launch my pen upon such an unknown sea, except the pleasure with which I drop anchor with it at the bottom of the third page,—for I seldom put into port sooner,—and jump on shore while

I fold it up in all the joy of freedom. It was quite otherwise when you and I were correspondents thirty years ago. I was then young, and ardent, and devoted rather to suffer than to lie still; I had abundance of surplus feelings, and thoughts, and imaginations, which I was delighted to disburthen to a faithful friend, who I was sure would read them with as much enthusiasm as I wrote. I have gone through many labors, and trials, and afflictions in the plain prose of human life since that time; and the poetry of my heart has been blighted and withered in the cold mildews and dry blasts which have gone over me since I was an inhabitant of the world of romance. This is very much like frenzy, you will say; there is, however, truth, implied if not expressed, in it, and truth which I have no power to communicate in ordinary words, and which I would not communicate if I could; for it is connected in me with that bitterness which the heart keeps to itself, and with which even a friend cannot altogether sympathize. In a word, I have lived so long, and have been carried by the flood of events to a situation which exposes me to the honor and misery of being deemed by many people a much greater, better, wiser man than I am; and consequently I must pay the price in the sacrifice of time, talents (such as they are), feeling, and peace of mind, for such distinction. The effect is, that I can do very little for myself; my spirits are exhausted with business to which I am compelled either by a sense of duty, or imperious necessity, — not having learnt to say *no*, — so that when I have an hour of leisure, I am out of tune, and sit down in sadness and despondency, thinking that I live almost in vain, if not worse than in vain, and that the little strength I have I spend for naught. During the last

four months I have been attempting, in lucid intervals, to compose a leading poem for a volume of fugitive pieces, which I have, flying about the kingdom in all directions; yet, hitherto, I have found it the hardest task of the kind I ever undertook, and of the success I cannot form an idea, indeed hardly a hope.

"But I must be brief. I have not written to you because I had no occasion, that is, no compulsion: I write now, because I have both."

This letter closed Montgomery's correspondence with Joseph Aston, of Manchester, who died a few years after, at the ripe age of 82.

Of his more direct labors in the vocation by which he is now best known to the world, we learn from himself in a letter to Mr. Bennett:

"Since I last wrote to you, if I recollect rightly, I have twice appeared before the world—as a *Christian Psalmist*, and as a *Christian Poet*. I allude to two volumes of compilations of psalms and hymns, in the first instance, in which I deemed poetry and piety to be united, with a hundred original pieces of my own, which has been a very successful publication, something of the kind having long been wanted. The sequel, the *Christian Poet*, had the same object in view, but comprehended pieces of a higher order, and laying claim to the genuine honors of verse, as the noblest vehicle of the noblest thoughts. This also promises to reward the spirited publisher, and, I may add, the laborious editor. Last week I assumed a new poetical shape, and came out as the author of the *Pelican Island*, of which I can say no more than that it is in blank verse, and that, if I find opportunity, I shall be exceedingly happy to enclose a copy of each of these

works, to 'kiss your hands' (as the Italians say) among the Hottentots."

"The Christian Psalmist; or Hymns selected and original," appeared at the close of the year 1825. These, 562 in number, are from several authors, including one-fifth from his own pen. The work went through several editions, and was very acceptable to the religious public.

Some remarks on Hymnology, from his introductory essay, will be interesting in these days of Christian psalmody :

"A hymn ought to be as regular in its structure as any other poem ; it should have a distinct subject, and that subject should be simple, not complicated, so that whatever skill or labor might be required in the author to develop his plan, there should be little or none required on the part of the reader to understand it. Consequently, a hymn must have a beginning, middle, and end. There should be a manifest gradation in the thoughts ; and their mutual dependence should be so perceptible that they could not be transposed without injuring the unity of the piece ; every line carrying forward the connection, and every verse adding a well-proportioned limb to a symmetrical body. The reader should know when the strain is complete, and be satisfied, as at the close of an air in music ; while defects and superfluities should be felt by him as annoyances, in whatever part they might occur. The practice of many good men, in framing hymns, has been quite the contrary. They have begun apparently with the only idea in their mind at the time ; another, with little relationship to the former, has been forced upon them by a refractory rhyme ; a third became necessary to eke out a verse ; a fourth, to begin one ; and so on, till, having compiled a sufficient number of stanzas of so many lines,

and lines of so many syllables, the operation has been suspended; whereas it might with equal consistency, have been continued to any imaginable length, and the tenth or ten thousandth link might have been struck out or changed places with any other, without the slightest infraction of the chain; the whole being a series of independent verses, collocated as they came, and the burden a canto of phrases, figures, and ideas, the common property of every writer who has none of his own, and therefore found in the works of each, unimproved, if not unimpaired, from generation to generation. Such rhapsodies may be sung from time to time, and keep alive devotion already kindled; but they leave no trace in the memory, make no impression on the heart, and fall through the mind as sounds glide through the ear—pleasant, it may be, in their passage, but never returning to haunt the imagination in retirement, or, in the multitude of the thoughts, to refresh the soul. Of how contrary a character, how transcendently superior in value as well as influence, are those hymns which, once heard, are remembered without effort—remembered involuntarily, yet remembered with renewed and increasing delight at every revival! It may be safely affirmed that the permanent favorites in every collection are those which, in the requisites before mentioned, or for some other peculiar excellence, are distinguished above the rest.”

Tried by this test, are his own hymns found wanting?

August 16, 1826, he writes to Mr. Bennett:

“From the hurry and anxiety of preparation for a journey to Harrogate, I snatch a few moments to flee over land and ocean—as I may do without the slightest interruption, though I cannot cross the room in which I am sitting without an effort of mind and limb—to meet you,

wherever you are at this time, in spirit, and whenever you arrive at the place to which this is directed, to meet you again on paper. The latter occasion, I hope, will be when you arrive at your last stage before embarking, *for good and all*, for Old England once more. At the Cape of Good Hope, then, and for the last time probably, such an interview will occur; I therefore gladly assure you, of what you know by your own feelings, that absence cannot lessen the sincere affection of long-enjoyed and long-tried Christian friendship, and if absence in this world cannot do it, where we have but the possibility of meeting again — absence from the body, when to be so absent is to be present with the Lord, cannot disunite those who love Him, for where *He* is, *we* shall be. Your last letter, from the Eastern Archipelago, showed me that, as you have turned the point from which the sun sets out to visit us, your heart feels the attraction of your native land stronger and stronger, and the sweetness of home-sickness grows more and more overpowering and bewildering. I can truly sympathise with you in the desolation of heart which you experienced on the coast of China, in the river of Canton, where the truth as it is in Jesus is proscribed. And there to find no letter from England, no introduction from Dr. Morrison — this, after coming from the islands of the South Sea, where ‘glory to God in the highest,’ &c. is singing from shore to shore, as if Christ were new-born among the people who sat in darkness there — this must have gone through your soul like a sword of ice, wounding, and chilling, and deadening, where it pierced Faith, Hope, and Charity themselves in your bosom. But it is discouraging to us to send out our messengers from time to time, we know not whither, in the hope that one or two may not miscarry. This shuts our hearts and restrains

our hands when we write, not knowing for whose eyes the lines may be destined. All the public affairs of this neighborhood you will learn from the newspapers; and from these you will find that the number of old familiar faces is diminishing: many you will never see again; and those you do, will not appear as they once did; they grow old, and yet renew their youth, like the eagle, with every opportunity of writing to or hearing from the beloved and absent.

"You are often inquired after by persons whose names I know not. Once more, your faithful friend."

An exquisite embodiment of the Christian element of good works belongs to this year:

THE STRANGER AND HIS FRIEND.

"Ye have done it unto me."—MATTH., XXV. 40.

"A poor way-faring Man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief,
That I could never answer 'Nay:'
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came;
Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love, I knew not why.

"Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered — not a word he spake —
Just famishing, for want of bread:
I gave him all — he blessed it, brake,
And ate, but gave me part again.
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

"I spied him, where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock: his strength was gone;
The heedless water mocked his thirst;
He heard it, saw it hurrying on:
I ran to raise the sufferer up;
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,
Dipt, and returned it, running o'er
I drank, and never thirsted more.

"'Twas night: the floods were out; it blew
A winter hurricane aloof:
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof.
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

"Stript, wounded, beaten, nigh to death,
I found him by the highway side:
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
Revived his spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment; he was healed:—
I had myself a wound concealed;
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And Peace bound up my broken heart.

"In prison I saw him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's doom at morn:
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him midst shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, 'I will.'

"Then in a moment to my view,
 The stranger darted from disguise;
 The tokens in his hands I knew,
 My Saviour stood before my eyes.
 He spake, and my poor name He named:
 'Of me thou hast not been ashamed;
 These deeds shall thy memorial be;
 Fear not, thou didst them unto Me.'"

Among the "memorial days" which mark at intervals the progress of the ecclesiastical year among the Moravians, is the 12th of May, on which the congregations commemorate the "agreement to the first *orders* or *statutes*" of the Brethren, as promulgated at Herrnhut in 1727. The centenary celebration of this event led Montgomery to Ockbrook, where he spent a few weeks very pleasantly between the religious services of the festival, and his out-door walks in the finest season of the year. Of his literary occupation while there, he thus writes to John Holland:

"I have with difficulty found time to fulfil my promise to-day. It means nothing now; but the fact means everything. I have been greatly engaged since I came hither, principally indeed with pen, ink, and paper; yet I know no three things more unmanageable than these when they fairly take possession of hands, head, and heart, as they have lately done of mine,—sometimes, I fear, to little purpose,—again I hope. In truth, the weather within me—that is, the weather on the *Pelican Island*—much resembles this froward, stormy, winter-like spring, with gleams of sunshine, and now and then a breath of air that turns all to paradise—but Paradise Lost soon follows Paradise Found with me. Pray give my best re-

membrance to Mr. Blackwell; and tell Miss Gales I will write to her as soon as my burthen is a little lighter."

In the autumn of this year Montgomery visited the north of England on a Bible tour, in company with his friend Rowland Hodgson. They were at Barnard Castle on the 28th of August, and at Darlington on the 4th of September: they also attended a meeting at Richmond, when the poet, in his speech, made an affecting allusion to Herbert Knowles, once a pupil in the school there, and whose well-known stanzas written in the churchyard, "Methinks it is good to be here," &c., he repeated with deep emotion. On the 10th of September they attended a meeting at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, at which were also present Dr. Steinkopff, foreign secretary of the Bible Society, and Dr. Marshman, the Baptist missionary from Serampore. Montgomery addressed the audience at considerable length, giving, as he often did, additional interest to his remarks by the charm of local allusion.

The ideal of a new poem had been floating in his mind for several years; ever since 1818, he tells us, when he read the narrative of a voyage in the Pacific, in which many islands of the Australian group were described as the solitary haunts of innumerable pelicans, where generations of birds had lived and died as unseen as unsung by man.

His imagination seized hold of the picture, and though for a long time it did little but flutter round the scene, the outlines of a new poem at last began to shape themselves into symmetry and fullness.

How it began to take form, and how a sudden glance at passing objects may quicken into life and beauty the rude material of our thought, the poet himself reveals:

"Long at a loss for a leading idea, as I was returning

to Sheffield from Scarborough last autumn, with my friend Mr. Hodgson, my attention was forcibly arrested by the singular appearance of the country about Thorp Arch, which was so completely flooded, that only a few of the more prominent points of ground were seen, like green islands amidst the lake. By some involuntary association of ideas, I was powerfully reminded of the Pelican Island. In a moment the radical thought of which I had been so long in quest rushed into my mind; and I saw the whole plan of my poem from beginning to end. I immediately began the subject in blank verse; and by the time we reached Ferrybridge, I had composed a number of lines, which I wrote down with my pencil in the inn there; and from that time to the present I have labored incessantly at the work, and now hope that its execution will be in some degree comparable to my conception of the subject."

In the warm glow of this new-born fervor, the poet wrought, with a loving diligence. Another work graced his name. Of its reception, and the author's feelings, we gather something from a letter to his friend Everett:

"The *Pelican Island* certainly has been a puzzle, not in its title only, which set conjecture concerning its plot at defiance, but in its development of that undiscoverable plot. Whatever be its faults or its merits, they are not of a common-place character, for they commanded earlier and more particular notice from that fraternity of dictators, the reviewers, than any previous publication of mine had done; and they have caused more diversity of opinion also among those gentlemen, every one of whom is infallible by himself, but taken together they are quite as fallible as those who most fear them could desire. There has been so much happy contradiction among these authorities re-

specting the *Pelican Island*, that it would be hard to find a sentence of censure or commendation in one of their critiques, which has not been reversed in another. Where doctors differ, this should be so; the public will in due time settle all differences, and form a judgment as independent of them as if they had never existed. Meanwhile the author's nerves must be exercised by every species of torture or transport, which the opinions of those who have his credit at their mercy can inflict or awaken, in the presence of his contemporaries, who at such a time, in his morbid imagination, have all their eyes upon him, like those of a mob upon the victim at an execution, and all their ears open to the sarcasms and plaudits that are poured upon him. Having now nearly passed this ordeal, and been thus far pretty favorably treated, I am gradually recovering my usual tone of feeling, and resigning my poem and myself to what may await us in the ordinary course of this world's affairs. Circumstances are daily occurring which remind me that I have every day a less stake in the interests of the present life than I had before, and that the things of eternity are becoming of more awful and imminent importance to me than they have hitherto been. I have no room, however, to moralize at present, but I can say truly that I desire to be delivered from this bondage of corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Then will the praise or condemnation of man on my vain labors to please him, and to gratify myself, as a poet, be of little influence either to depress or exalt above measure my too susceptible feelings, in whatever relates to that object of my past (perhaps my present) idolatry, the fame which I once

thought the most desirable good under heaven. I must turn to other subjects in your letter."

Pelican Island, published in 1827, was the last of Mr. Montgomery's longer poems. Descriptive, as it is, of a solitary contemplation of nature in her manifold changes and forms of life, a graceful fancy and a delicate apprehension of the uncaused cause

— "of effects that seemed spontaneous
And sprang in infinite succession, linked
With kindred issues, infinite as they,
For which Almighty skill had laid the train,
Even in the elements of chaos,—whence
The unravelling clew not for a moment lost
Hold of the silent hand that drew it out,"

mark the poem. Leading reviewers of the time pronounced some portions of it Miltonic; the deficiency which characterizes all his larger productions—want of unity—is no less obvious in this. A patriarchal grandeur and solemnity are impressed, on its close:

"The world grows darker, lonelier, and more silent,
As I go down into the vale of years:
For the grave's shadows lengthen in advance,
And the grave's loneliness appalls my spirit,
And the grave's silence sinks into my heart,
Till I forget existence, in the thought
Of non-existence, buried for a while
In the still sepulchre of my own mind,
Itself imperishable:—ah! that word,
Like the archangel's trumpet, wakes me up
To deathless resurrection. Heaven and earth
Shall pass away, but that which thinks within me
Must think forever; that which feels, must feel:
I am, and I can never cease to be.

Oh, thou that readest! take this parable
Home to thy bosom; think as I have thought,
And feel as I have felt, through all the changes
Which Time, Life, Death, the world's great actors, wrought,
While centuries swept like morning dreams before me,
And thou shalt find this moral to my song:
Thou art and thou canst never cease to be;
What then are Time, Life, Death, the World, to thee?
I may not answer; ask Eternity."

"At the beginning of the summer of 1828, Montgomery," we extract from his English biography, "was again deeply engaged with the question of negro slavery. Meetings had been held in other towns to further the entire abolition of that abominable system; and it was now the turn of the abolitionists in Sheffield to come forward as became them in this mighty movement. Upon the poet devolved the duty of calling his townspeople together, drawing up resolutions to lay before them, and preparing a petition to Parliament. This was an affair of considerable delicacy; for while most of the inhabitants, who thought on the subject at all, were agreed as to the desirableness, as well as the practicability of putting an end to slavery in the British dominions, they differed materially about the time and the manner of doing it. Montgomery, whose prudence happily was commensurate with his enthusiasm, so managed the matter, that all parties, even the most scrupulous, could concur at least in the prayer of the petition; while others, who overlooked all conflicting considerations in the admitted fact that here was a monster evil which ought to be remedied, were pleased with the placard calling the meeting, in which Montgomery had instructed the printer to use the largest type he had in the first of the two words of the head-

line — ‘No Slavery!’ The meeting was held on the 9th of June, when Montgomery spoke at great length, and with equal propriety and effect.”*

In the autumn he journeyed in Wales. Mrs. Hemans tells us of seeing him :

“I had an interesting visit a few days since from the poet Montgomery, not the new aspirant to that name, but the ‘real Peter Bell.’ He is very pleasing in manner and countenance, notwithstanding a mass of troubled, streaming, *meteoric-looking* hair, that seemed as if it had just been contending with the blasts of Snowdon, from which he had just returned full of animation and enthusiasm. He complained much in the course of conversation, and I heartily joined with him, of the fancy which wise people have in the present times *for setting one right* ; cheating one, that is, out of all the pretty old legends and stories, in the place of which they want to establish dull facts.

* This and similar meetings in different parts of the country were auxiliary to one which was held in Exeter Hall in the month of March, and at which Lord Brougham presided. Although not personally present at this great metropolitan gathering of anti-slavery delegates, Montgomery’s words were heard, and his spirit felt, even on that occasion, in a way which will not soon be forgotten by those individuals who listened to the animating speech of the Rev. J. Carlisle, of Belfast, and joined in the applause which followed its concluding sentiment :

“Where a tyrant never trod,
Where a slave was never known,
But where Nature worships God,
In the wilderness alone —
Thither, thither, would I roam ;
There my children may be free ;
I for them will find a home,
They shall find a grave for me.”

Wanderer of Switzerland, Part vi., 5

We mutually grumbled about Fair Rosamond, Queen Eleanor and the poisoned wound, Richard the Third and his hump-back; but agreed most resolutely that nothing *should* ever induce us to give up William Tell."

"The new aspirant" here alluded to was a clergyman bearing the same name (Robert Montgomery), whose maiden effort was equivocally heralded — "Montgomery's New Poem, The Omnipresence of the Deity." Both friends and booksellers were misled, and James had to bear the brunt of undeserved criticism, and what was more painful and provoking, indiscriminate puffing.

A letter from Southey :

"Keswick, April 28, 1829.

"MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

"I received your parcel just long enough ago to have read the brief note which it contained from my dear and good old friend, Joseph Cottle, your letter, and your *Introductory Essay to the Pilgrim's Progress*. First, let me thank you for your letter, for the books, and for the kind manner in which you remember one who always remembers you with respect and admiration, and with as much affection as can be felt for one of whom, much to his own regret, he personally knows so little. Then let me complain of you for supposing I should not agree with you in your estimate either of the character or the genius of John Bunyan, a name which I never mention without honor, nor think of without pleasure. I am not conscious of any feeling, thought, word, or deed, at any time of my life, which could have led you to imagine that in this case I was morally and intellectually blind. Indeed, when I was applied to by an old acquaintance, on the part of Mr. Major the bookseller, to perform an office which I did not

till this day know that you had performed before me, the motive which induced me to accept the offer was pure liking for the task, out of pure love for the author and the book.

“Had I known of your edition, I should certainly and at once have declined the proposal. But I am glad that I did not know it: ignorance, which in some cases is said to be bliss, has been good fortune here. Yours is a critical essay, mine will be a biographical one; and we shall have nothing in common but the desire to do honor to the author, and to introduce the book into new circles (if that can be), except what I shall borrow from you thankfully.

“I will take care that a copy of my intended edition shall be sent to you as soon as it is ready, which the publisher intends it to be in the end of autumn.

“I am almost hopeless when I ask, Will you come and see me, and let me row you on the lake, and guide you upon some of these mountains? You are not in harness now; and I, who shall never be out of it, have always leisure to enjoy the company of a friend. I am going with my family to the Isle of Man for change of air and sea-bathing, which may benefit some of my daughters, and also was a needful removal for myself, when the hot weather comes, to prevent or cut short that troublesome periodical disease which is now known by the name of the *Hay-asthma*, and the habit of which I hope I have weakened, if not broken, by travelling at the time of its recurrence. Our stay will not be extended beyond the end of June. If you come to us in July—the earlier the better—you shall have a cordial welcome; and you shall find me the same person in private that you have known me in print. Last year I underwent an operation which has restored me to the free use of my strength in walking,

after being crippled many years by a sore infirmity: I thank God it has been effectually removed, and I am once more a sound man, able to accompany you for a whole day's excursion. If you have not seen this country, you ought to see it; and if you have, you will know it is worth seeing again. And I should like to show you the books which are the pride of my eye and the joy of my heart, the only treasure which I have ever been anxious of heaping together, and to read to you the papers which I have in progress, and to tell you the projects—so many of which death will cut short—of which I have dreamt, or still hope to execute, and to talk with you of many things. Now tell me you will come, and believe me yours, always with affectionate respect and regard,

“ROBERT SOUTHEY.”

We find Montgomery a few weeks later in Keswick, but not in response to this cordial invitation. In company with Mr. Rowland Hodgson, he is going north in behalf of the Bible cause, and their route lay through Keswick, whose scenery and society had a double claim upon the poet's heart.

Of his journey and enjoyments, let us hear from himself:

“We attended six Bible meetings between Monday and Friday, and yesterday was the first breathing time that we could really enjoy; yet the enjoyment was perhaps the hardest fatigue we have yet undergone. Some kind ladies, who accompanied us from Kendal, made a party for an excursion. We breakfasted on the banks of Windermere, travelled over the intervening hills to Grasmere, and thence to Rydal, concluding the round by a visit to Mr. Wordsworth, so that my spirits were sufficiently exhausted on our return hither to justify a ramble alone to recruit

them; and then going further than I intended, the opportunity of writing to Sheffield was gone by; and thus, as I have said, a moment lost is lost forever!

"I have little to say concerning myself since I came away. I might make many complaints of personal infirmities, and mental sufferings, and so forth, which are my daily crosses when I am from home, and make travelling, with all its healthful exercise and exhilarating changes of scene and society, little better than penance and pilgrimage to me; though in retrospect it always furnishes abundant materials for thought, for thankfulness, and for hope also. Mercy and goodness hitherto, as on all former occasions, have followed me every step of the way; and the close of every stage and every day I have had cause to be humble and happy, though too often I have been neither one nor the other, as I ought to be. I cannot to-day—indeed, it must be put off till I can do it with the living voice—give you any particulars of our adventures: there have been none of a romantic character, nor any descriptive of the scenery which we have noticed,—indeed, we are only just entering into Lake-land; the promise is great, and it will be my own fault if I am disappointed. I may just say that I have seen the greatest lion here,—Wordsworth; and the dens of two others,—the Opium Eater's, and Professor Wilson's (Christopher North). Wordsworth's house and grounds are all that a poet could wish for in reason and reverie; for after having seen them and him, I said they were more beautiful and *appropriate* than he himself could have invented if he had the whole lakes, mountains, and all, to have called into an arrangement of his own, in the happiest mood of his own mind. De Quincey's cottage is a little nutshell of a house; but though I could discern nothing

attractive about it, I should have been glad to have peeped in, if I could have been to him what he was to me—invisible. Professor Wilson's is a small, handsome house and pleasure ground, of which I merely caught a glimpse, as we rolled through the dust of the road before the slope on which it stands."

To Sarah Gales at Sheffield :

"This day (June 11), immediately after reading Mr. Bennett's and Mr. Wilberforce's letters—both of which I shall duly answer—I set out, with Mr. Hodgson's two servants and a guide, to Skiddaw, though I had some of the weight of Helvellyn yet on my shoulders. The morning was fine, but the prospect below was hazy, and my mind was too much occupied with the South Sea Islands, and all the strange and savage lands and oceans which our friend had visited during his eight years' circumnavigation of the world, to notice, as I otherwise might have done, the immensity of land and sea, in every diversity of form, that lay beneath my feet. On the very summit, after I had breathed my fervent thanksgiving to God for all the goodness and mercy that had accompanied him on all his way, I wrote his name on a slate-stone with a lead pencil, and the date of his landing in England. This I threw upon a pile that supports the flag-staff on the highest peak; and though mortal eye may never see the record, and the first shower may efface it, I felt something more than romantic pleasure in writing and leaving this memorial there of the best intelligence which we have received from him since he sailed,—his happy return home. Thomas, Joseph, and I then heartily drank his good health and safe convoy to Sheffield in pure brandy, for we could not find a drop of water to dilute it. The vast convexity of the mountain

is covered with thin broken pieces of slate, the storms of ages having shattered the original crest of rock. I thought it looked like the field of the battle of Armageddon, strewn with the splinters of swords, and shields, and the wreck of armor, long after the bodies of the slain had been devoured by the fowls of heaven. Farewell, God bless you !”

To John Holland :

“Kirkby Lonsdale, June 20, 1829.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Your kind letter reached me at Penrith on Monday morning. We have had such a week of hurry and journeying from place to place, and I have been occasionally so unwell from anxiety among strangers, and exhaustion from thinking to little purpose, and speaking I hope not always to none, that I have had neither spirit nor leisure to write. Even kindness — and nothing but kindness have we experienced — is oppressive to one so framed as I am ; and though I am full of complaints at this moment, yet if I were to utter them they would be all against myself, and would probably awaken very imperfect sympathy in the minds of those most willing to compassionate me, — for I hope they would be scarcely intelligible. I will therefore say no more concerning them. Arrangements have been made for Bible meetings on four successive days next week, from Monday to Thursday inclusive ; and if we happily survive so much exertion, excitement, and enjoyment, as they promise, — judging by what similar opportunities have already produced or required, — we hope to reach Sheffield on Saturday afternoon, June 27, by way of Settle, Skipton, Colne, Bradford, Wakefield, and Barnsley. Please to request Mr. Blackwell to

forward the *Iris*, addressed to me, at the Post Office, Skipton, where any letter from home may also meet me if despatched not later than Tuesday, after which it will be uncertain where I may be caught. You mention the haunts of poets among the mountains where I have been wandering; and I doubt not, if you had been in my circumstances, you would have much more benefited by the opportunity of indulging honorable curiosity than I have done. I wish, indeed, I had more of your spirit than I have; for I am sure (if I understand you rightly) I should then escape many miseries, and put myself in the way of many felicities, instead of reversing the law of nature, as I often do, to fall from mere fear of them into the former, and shrink, I know not why, from the latter, even when they court me. However, I have not been without many delightful lucid intervals since I left home, and have had the hardihood not only to call upon Wordsworth, with a body-guard of fair ladies, and a poet, the son of a poet, to introduce me; but, on the last day of our stay at Keswick, I ventured to rap at the door of my friend the laureate, though I knew that he and his family were gone from home; but I heard that Mrs. Coleridge was keeping house for him, and, on the ground of former acquaintance with her husband, I plucked up courage to introduce myself to her, and avail myself of the opportunity of looking at the well-furnished shelves and through the windows of the poet's study. His house and library are such as even you, with all your moderation, might be forgiven for coveting—with the salvo, that he should be no poorer. But I cannot give any particulars here, writing as I do in an inn, and in great haste, not knowing when I may have another leisure hour, as we are going off almost immediately to Casterton, where we are

to be entertained a day or two in the hospitable family of W. W. Carus Wilson, father to the Rev. W. Carus Wilson, a clergyman in this neighborhood, who has been several times at Sheffield, on Christian anniversary occasions, and of whom I may tell you something more on my return. I think I mentioned, in my last letter to the Misses Gales, that I had ascended both Helvellyn and Skiddaw. From the top of the former I saw, for the first time since I left it, more than forty years ago, my native country. Beyond the Solway Frith the undulating hills of Scotland, in a blue-grey line (the atmosphere being very hazy), were dimly discernible. I had not calculated on this; and the scene took me so by surprise, that, though I was not prepared by any romantic anticipation, the singular motion which stirred my spirit within me, and made the blood in my veins, as it were, run back to the fountain from which they were filled, was even more deeply agitating than I could have imagined. At Keswick I had the yet more mysterious pleasure of shaking hands with a being thrice as old as Methuselah (I presume), though I cannot tell the age of the invisible within a few hundred years. And it *was* an invisible literally, for the hand that I grasped came out of darkness, and was the *color* of darkness—‘black, but comely;’ it was a *left* hand, and evidently that of a female, very small, and most delicately proportioned, ‘With fingers long, and fit to touch the lute.’ Yet neither the lady’s age, nor the beauty of that specimen of herself which was presented to my eye, tempted me to put a gold ring on the wedding finger. I cannot describe the strange sensation which I experienced when this, the hand of a mummy (and nothing but the hand of a mummy), was put into mine, and I examined it as a relic of a fellow-

creature, 'of the first order of fine forms,' who might have been Pharaoh's daughter herself, or her maid, and this the very hand that first touched the ark of bulrushes, and, lifting up the veil, disclosed the face of the infant Moses to the compassionate friends—'and behold the babe wept.' There, I must leave you to finish the picture and imagine the rest of my reverie, for I must conclude. Pen and ink are both so bad that I can scrawl no more, and my time is gone. I was on a journey by land and water across Windermere and the intervening hills to the head of Coniston Water, on Whit Monday. In a lovely, lonely lane near the latter, I walked during the teachers' meeting in the afternoon. My heart overflowed with affectionate remembrance of the occasions on which I had in former years spent so many happy hours, and my prayers were fervently offered for you all. Pray give my kindest regards to my dear friends in the Hartshead. If I do not write to them again they may expect me this day fortnight, as above intimated. Remember me respectfully to Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Roberts."

We do not learn exactly when the two friends returned to Sheffield; the latest date of any memento of their tour is that of the following lines, composed for Miss Elizabeth Carus Wilson, of Casterton, on the anniversary of her birthday, June 22, 1829:

"Another year of trial here
At length has passed away;
But Mercy crowned its weary round
With one more Sabbath day;
Though each had been a day of grace,
It was the last that won the race.

“When suffering life shall end its strife
In death’s serene repose;
Be Sabbath rest, on Jesus’ breast,
Its everlasting close;
Your daily cross may you lay down,
To gain an everlasting crown!”

CHAPTER XIV.

RETURN OF MR. BENNETT — DEATH OF DANIEL TYREMAN — EDITORIAL DUTIES — LETTER OF ADVICE TO A YOUNG POET — LECTURES IN LONDON UPON POETRY — DR. MILNOR — VOYAGES AND TRAVELS OF TYREMAN AND BENNETT — LETTER TO SAMUEL DUNN — ANTI-SLAVERY REJOICINGS.

ON the 5th of June, 1829, Mr. Bennett landed at Deal, and the following morning proceeded to London, from whence he wrote to Montgomery:

“This *is* ‘my dear, my native land!’ Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits! As we proceeded from Deal to Margate, surely never landscape appeared more beautiful to human being than all the country did to me; ‘the eye was never satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing’ the rural sights and rural sounds which convinced my heart that I was at length got home. The grass, the flowers, the trees, in gardens, fields, and hedgerows, all English in color, and form, and fragrance, especially the golden clusters of the laburnum, and the prodigality of ‘milk-white thorn,’ reminded me of all that I had loved in youth, and was now again privileged to behold and enjoy after years of absence in strange climes.”

On the 11th Montgomery writes to Bennett:

“Your last letter, and the most welcome of all that have been received from you, from every quarter of the world,

because it *is* the last, and written on British ground, reached me at this place just when I was setting out on an expedition to the top of Skiddaw. I hastily read it, and with a heart overflowing with joy at the good tidings which it brought of your arrival, I proceeded on my way, leaving to our good friend, Mr. R. Hodgson, to occupy the first pages of a letter of congratulation, which we at once determined to send to you, on your long-wished-for and now happily-accomplished return to your native country. But though my limbs, with the occasional help of a pony, bore me to the height of the magnificent mountain above named, and though my eyes surveyed an immensity of horizon, comprehending land and sea, lakes, rivers, hills, and woods, in the richest diversity, all spread like a map beneath my feet, my mind, but especially my heart, has been engaged with you all the forenoon; and from the stupendous elevation on which I stood, I saw not only the adjacent portions of the British Isles, which every eye may see on any clear day from thence, but I traced you all round the world, and the isles of the South Seas, New Zealand, New Holland, China, the two Indies, Madagascar, South Africa, St. Helena, and all the oceans you have crossed, dividing and connecting the utmost regions of the earth, even to the very spot where you landed at length on our own dear shores—all these were present to my spirit, and in each of these I could perceive that goodness and mercy had followed you all the days of your long absence on a circumnavigation of charity, the first that has been made by an individual since man fell, and the promise of a Saviour was given. I will not flatter you; I know it will humble you when I say that you are, in this respect, the most privileged of all that have lived, or do live, having alone done what never was before attempted, and what

your late honored and lamented companion was not allowed to achieve : the glory thus granted to you, you will lay at the Redeemer's feet, and say, it is the Lord's doing that I have been exalted to do this ; and to his name be all the praise. On the summit of Skiddaw, under the blue infinity of heaven above, and in the presence of the widest compass of earth I ever saw, except once before, I laid my thank-offering on that altar not made with hands, to Him who has been the refuge of his people through all generations ; to Him who, ' before the mountains were brought forth, *was God.*' I laid my thank-offering to Him *there*, for all the deliverances which He has wrought *for* you, for all the mercies he has conferred *upon* you, for all the good which I believe has been done *by* you, during your long labors and many sufferings, and especially for this last evidence of his loving-kindness towards you, and towards us, too, in answering our prayers, and bringing you safe to our own land and yours ; and my heart's desire and prayer for you was, that you may yet long be spared to tell of his goodness and his wonderful works. Mr. Hodgson has so fully expressed my feelings in expressing his own, that I need add nothing further than '*God bless you!*' Yea, and you shall be blessed."

Mr. Bennett returned alone, after an absence of eight years, his excellent colleague in the deputation, Rev. Daniel Tyreman, having died at Madagascar on his way home, July 30, 1828.

The Independent chapel at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, where for seventeen years he was a faithful minister of the Gospel, reared a monument to his memory, with an inscription by Montgomery, expressing the fullness of trust with which the dying minister gave himself into the keeping of a faithful and unchanging God :

“ ‘The covenant of grace’ shall stand
When heaven and earth depart;
On this he laid his dying hand,
And clasped it to his heart.
In a strange land, where sudden death
Stopt his unfinished race,
This was the plea of his last breath —
‘The covenant of grace.’ ”

The copious journals of the Deputation were now in the hands of the London Missionary Society, to be recast for publication. A suitable editor was needed, and Mr. Montgomery was selected for the task, a work which he undertook with alacrity, from the strong hold which both the Deputation and its object had upon his personal affections and Christian sympathies.

Some idea of the amount of labor to be done may be gained by thinking of reducing fifty manuscript volumes to a moderate size for publication.

“Most of my leisure time for three months,” he tells us, when fairly on it, “has been employed, and it will take at least nine months more to complete it. I therefore must stay at home,” he says to the solicitations of his out-of-town friends, “or, if I go, take my work with me.”

Christmas, with the close of the old year (1829), and the beginning of the new, was passed with Mr. Bennett at the house of his friend’s nephew, Mr. M‘Coy, at Hackney, a little village on the edge of the metropolis.

A memorial of the visit, introducing us to the young host and his family is pleasantly jotted down by their poet guest :

“FOR MRS. EDWARD M‘COY.

“Thus hath the man of wisdom spoken ;
 ‘A threefold cord is not soon broken.’”—PROV.

“Three lines of life entwined in one
 The poet’s eye can see,
 From Time’s swift wheel, by moments spun,
 To reach infinity.

“The first *your own*, my gentle friend,
 Then *his*, whom you call ‘lord ;’
 The third, your *babe’s* ; these softly blend,
 And form a threefold cord.

“Long may they thus together hold
 In sweet communion here,
 Ere each in turn, infirm and old,
 From earth shall disappear.

“But must they then be sundered ? No,
 Like mingling rays of light,
 Where heaven’s eternal splendors glow,
 These fragments shall unite,

“To form a threefold cord above,
 By Mercy interwound,
 And to the throne of sovereign love
 Indissolubly bound.

“My wish, prayer, hope, these words betoken,
 That threefold cord be ‘*never*’ broken.

“Hackney, January 13, 1830.”

This letter is to Mr. Bennett, at Tryon’s Place, Hackney :

“Sheffield, January 28, 1830.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“At length I have an opportunity of sending a line to

you, to say on paper what my heart has said a hundred times in your presence, if you could have heard it speak, when we were together of late, side by side in coaches, arm in arm on open roads, or threading the everlasting mazes of those live labyrinths, the streets of London, or — for I must go a little further — when we have sat together in the house of God, or face to face at the hospitable fireside in Tryon's Place [Hackney] and elsewhere. Turn back to the first four lines of the antecedent connection — how much I felt myself indebted to your delicate, yet assiduous and persevering kindness to me, on our London and country visits during the severe weather of Christmas and the new year: 1829 and 1830 were absolutely frozen together at the meeting points, but our hearts were *not* frozen, — they often burned within us by the way, when we talked of those things that were most dear and precious to us both. I am glad to learn from Mr. M'Coy that you continue to bear the sharp winter cold with comparative comfort, notwithstanding your long residence in tropical climates. Your *mind* must rule your body; and, as it has a firmness for endurance beyond that of any man I ever knew, it surely communicates to the body a temperature which, if it does not neutralize, qualifies the extremes of icy rigor and torrid fervor to itself. May you long enjoy the blessing of a sound mind in a sound body, but especially of a heart right in the sight of God, which shall render all his dispensations, afflictive or joyous, *right in your sight*. This is the Christian's secret of happiness; may you ever be in possession of it in this world of trials, where faith is perpetually put to proof, and often staggers, not at the promises only, but at the wisdom and goodness of God, from our frailty and ignorance in judging of his works and ways!

“But I hope you do not spend all your time in the open air, breathing and bustling through vapors, and clouds, and storms, or plunging through snow-drifts ; some of it, nay, a great deal of it, I trust, is employed in reading those delightful manuscripts which I left with you, and in writing others yet more delightful for my use, and the future benefit of the public. I want, especially at this time, at least as soon as you can furnish them, accounts respecting your first plunge into the Pacific, when your friend, Mr. Tyreman, overturned the canoe, in mounting from the edge on board of the ship at anchor, the ordination of Ouna and his companion for the mission to the Marquesas, and the king Horitia’s ‘little speech,’ &c., and your misadventure, again, when attempting to land on one of the Sandwich Islands. Your personal feelings and situation no one but yourself can describe in the first and latter of these cases. Do not wait for more materials, but let me have *these* at your earliest convenience : be as brief or as wordy as you please. The other subjects, of which I left memoranda with Mr. M’Coy, you will attend to in succession ; and the earlier the better for yourself, for me, and for the work with which I am proceeding as well as I can ; but, from illness since my return home, I have yet made but little way, having been becalmed in bed for the greater part of last week. A fresh gale, however, has sprung up, and in a day or two I expect to be sailing with full canvas. Send me your help by furnishing me with matter both of your own and Mr. Tyerman’s. At present I have enough to go on with of the latter ; but when you have gone through ten volumes, please to forward them by coach to me.”

“I certainly do not make haste,” he again writes ; “but

yet I go on; and if not with good speed, at least with good will, and unflinching resolution to do my best according to circumstances. The labor, however, is far more *minute* than I expected. I thought that little more than careful abridgment would be requisite; but, in truth (materials excepted), it costs me as much as original composition. I do not, however, repent the undertaking, and I will not shrink from any expense of time and thought to do justice, if possible, to the subject, and credit to the cause. When you come down at Easter, you will, of course, bring with you all the volumes of Mr. Tyerman's Journal you may have, at that time, looked over. . . . I am infirm and spiritless, except when I am vexed into something like strong feeling by local and party feuds, out of which I cannot disentangle myself, and in which I deliberately involved myself at first, *as a victim, I may say*, that by a well-foreseen sacrifice of personal comfort, and what is more dear to me than pecuniary interest, — peace of mind, — I might mitigate the strife of tongues, and the civil war of passions and prejudices, in this town, on the subject of Water Companies."

An out-spoken letter this, in reply to an unfledged poet asking advice from a veteran bird:

"DEAR SIR,

"I am almost fretted out of the little meekness that remains to me after the wear and tear of more than three-score years, principally by literary clients who think because they often see my name in print, that there must needs be a potency in it not only to command fame and fortune for the owner, but to recommend all who can secure the sanction of it in any way to the same enviable rewards of rhyming labors. 'All is not gold that glitters.'

Had not a bountiful Providence otherwise loaded me with benefits, in my humblest estate, equal to my few wants, poetry would not have enriched me. It found me poor, and it would have kept me so to the end, unless I had pursued its reveries in a very different path from that which I chose after the folly and madness of youth had taught me that 'all was vanity and vexation of spirit.' Whether 'fame and fortune' would have been mine in a greater proportion had I otherwise practised my art, I know not, and regret not to remain ignorant; but having proved for myself that 'the way of transgressors is hard,' I am deeply and humbly thankful that, as a poet at least, I endeavored to depart from it before an accelerated bias had carried me onward to irretrievable ruin in it. It is not that I am unwilling to aid young aspirants in their early exertions—I *have* the will and *not* the power to serve them. Hence, instead of cheering them on in their course, I am compelled in honesty and truth to warn them against too great reliance either on their own talents however promising, or the patronage of the public however liberally-performing in those splendid cases which are the exceptions and not the usage of the arbitrary rule in the Chancery of Parnassus, wherein woe to the man who has a suit! Whatever be the equity of his cause, it may last him—not to say it may cost him—his life; unless he abandons it after the first decree made either in his favor or against him—for of two evils the last is the lesser: if the judgment be against him, he has only lost what he *intended* to win; if he wins, what does he do? retire with gains? No, he hazards another stake, when it is a hundred to one but he loses what he *had* got, and thus is not merely disappointed but dishonored.

“But I am running away from you and your letter while I am lamenting over other correspondents and their epistles, which I am obliged to answer by breaking to their hearts the promises which they themselves made to their hopes when they determined to make me their counsellor and their guide on their journey up ‘the steep,’ so ‘hard to climb,’ ‘where Fame’s proud temple shines from far.’ Though you were in some respects one of this number, and I may have more than once made your heart ache with the discouragements which I have in compassion as well as in sincerity thrown in your way as a candidate for poetical honors, yet as you have other views and other resources in your literary exercises and experiments, I may conscientiously bid you go forward, and congratulate you on having chosen a better part, in your commendable purposes to benefit your generation, than by concentrating your energies, and perhaps wasting them on the profitless labors of a versifier. You have been happy also in having apparently formed a connection with a publisher of that standing and respectability which affords you the chance of an introduction to a circle or class of readers both numerous and influential; while the subjects (those in prose, I mean) on which you have hitherto written are adapted to please *two* generations, — the *reigning* and the *rising*, whatever be their lot beyond; for as posterity will care very little for any of us except some two or three, we need care as little for it: its favor would come too late to make us vain, and its neglect will not break our hearts in the grave. . . . Don’t be alarmed; I am not censuring but counselling, having had no little experience in matters of this kind, and wishing to benefit you by a lesson which has cost me dear. On no theme, whether in prose or rhyme, ought we to lavish *all* our thoughts

much less *all* our words, no more than all our *good* thoughts in *corresponding* words, but select the best only of each. Without literally, or rather servilely, adhering to this rule, yet making it the guide of your pen in composition, you will gradually acquire a clear, spirited, and comprehensive diction that will greatly enhance the value of your productions. . . .

“I am truly your friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.

“Mr. Edward Farr, Iver, near Uxbridge.”

In May, Montgomery returned to London to deliver a course of lectures upon English Literature before the Royal Institution.

The favor with which these were received, induced the managers to engage his services for the next year, when his “Lectures upon Poetry” were given. These were published two years afterwards, and republished in this country by Messrs. Harper, the volume forming one of their series, known as the “Family Library.”

These lectures discuss the Preëminence, the Form, the Diction, the various Classes, the Themes, and the Influences of Poetry, every word expressing a genuine lover of the art, and a just discernment of both its expressible and its inexpressible elements.

“Poetry,” he says, “is the eldest, the rarest, and the most excellent of the fine arts. It was the first fixed form of language; the earliest perpetuation of thought; it existed before prose in history, before music in melody; before painting in description; and before sculpture in imagery. Anterior to the discovery of letters, it was employed to communicate the lessons of wisdom, to celebrate the achievements of valor, and to promulgate the sanctions

of law. Music was invented to accompany, and painting and sculpture to illustrate it."

The verdict of Johnson upon "pious poetry" in his life of Waller, is analyzed and dissented from.

"In the end," he says, "it will be found to throw light upon a single point only—a point on which there was no darkness at all—namely, that the style of devotional poetry must be suited to the theme, whether that be a subject of piety, or a motive to piety.

"Those who will take the trouble to examine the passage at length will find that all the eloquent dictation contained in it affects neither argumentative, descriptive, nor narrative poetry on sacred themes, as exemplified in the great works of Milton, Young, and Cowper. That man has neither ear, nor heart, nor imagination to know genuine poesy, and to enjoy its sweetest or its sublimest influences, who can doubt the supremacy of such passages as the 'Song of the Angels' in the third, and the 'Morning Hymn of Adam and Eve' in the fifth book of 'Paradise Lost;' the first part of the ninth book of the 'Night Thoughts;' and the anticipation of millennial blessedness in the sixth book of 'The Task;' yet these are on sacred subjects, and these are religious poetry. There are but four universally and permanently popular *long* poems in the English language—'Paradise Lost,' 'The Night Thoughts,' 'The Task,' and 'The Seasons.' Of these the three former are decidedly religious in their character; and of the latter it may be said, that one of the greatest charms of Thomson's master-piece is the pure and elevated spirit of devotion which occasionally breathes out amid the reveries of fancy and the pictures of nature, as though the poet had caught sudden and transporting glimpses of the Creator himself through the perspective of his works;

while the crowning hymn, at the close, is unquestionably one of the most magnificent specimens of verse in any language, and only inferior to the inspired prototypes in the Book of Psalms, of which it is, for the most part, a paraphrase. As much may be said of Pope's 'Messiah,' which leaves all his original productions immeasurably behind it, in combined elevation of thought, affluence of imagery, beauty of diction, and fervency of spirit.

"It follows, that poetry of the highest order may be composed on pious themes; and the fact that three out of the only four long poems which are daily reprinted for every class of readers among us, are at the same time religious—that fact ought forever to silence the cuckoo-note which is echoed from one mocking-bird of Parnassus to another, that poetry and devotion are incompatible: no man in his right mind, who knows what both words mean, will admit the absurdity for a moment."

On the influence of the poet, he thus feelingly and eloquently expatiates:

"He holds a perilous talent, on a fearful responsibility, who can invent, combine, and fix with inseparable union, words, thoughts, and images, and give them motion like that of the planets—not to cease till the heavens shall be dissolved, and the earth, with the works therein, burnt up. Is there a power committed to man so great? Is there one that can be more beneficently or more malignantly exercised? The deeds of warriors, the decrees of princes, the revolutions of empires, do not so much, so immediately, so permanently affect the moral character, the social condition, the weal and the woe of the human race, as the lessons of wisdom or folly, of glory, virtue, and piety, pride, revenge, depravity, licentiousness, and the converse of these—in the writings of those mysterious

beings who have an intellectual existence among us, and rule posterity, not 'from their urns,' like dead heroes, whose acts only are preserved in remembrance, but by their very spirits living, breathing, speaking in their works; therein holding communion with the spirits of all who read or hear their syren or their seraph strains; and thus becoming good or evil angels to successive generations, tempting to vice and crime, to misery and destruction; or leading through ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. Millions of thoughts and images, fixed in the palpable forms of words, and put into perpetual motion by these benefactors or scourges of their species, are passing down in the track of time, upon the length and breadth of the whole earth, blessing or cursing the people of one age after another; and let authors tremble at the annunciation, perpetuating the righteousness of aggravating the quiet of men whose bones are in the sepulchre, and their souls in eternity."

It was at the anniversary season of this year (1830) that Dr. Milnor, of New York, appeared as a delegate from the American Bible Society to the British and Foreign Bible Society, the first public interchange of Christian sympathies between these noble institutions.

When the purport of his visit was made known, he was made the bearer of greetings, and commissions of a similar nature, from the Tract Society, Sunday-school Union, Board of Foreign Missions, and other kindred associations to their twin-sisters on the other side of the Atlantic.

Here he met Wilberforce and Rowland Hill, Fowell Buxton, Bickersteth, Gurney, Dr. Chalmers, Wilson, Montgomery, whose very names are watchwords, stirring the soul to loftier aims.

Dr. Milnor was present at the Wesleyan Missionary So-

ciety, the most "animating public meeting" he ever attended. Freemason's Hall was crowded with gentlemen at the anniversary of the Bible Society. George Bennett was in the chair of the Sunday-school Union, and Wilberforce presided over the Anti-Slavery assembly; gatherings where party names were forgotten, and

"Each fulfilled their part
With sympathising heart"

for the on-coming kingdom of the Lord.

During the summer, which was spent in travelling, Dr. Milnor visited Sheffield, and had several delightful interviews with Montgomery. Both in public and private they took sweet counsel together. At a meeting of the Bible associations of the city, we find the Doctor on the stand.

"Mr. Montgomery," he tells us, "made the closing speech with a warm glow of feeling, and an affectionate importunity of expression. His only difficulty seemed to lie in finding vent for the flood of ideas that constantly rushed upon his mind. This made him occasionally stammer a moment, but a short pause always restored his self-possession; and his plain but forcible delivery riveted the attention of his hearers."

After a few days in a "loved circle of Christian spirits," Dr. Milnor parted from Montgomery at his own house, where he took tea, and "passed an hour and a half in delightful communion of feeling with this gifted poet and most devoted Christian."

He met also Mr. Holland, author of "Summerfield's Life," editor of the *Iris*, and intimate friend of the poet, whose biographer he afterwards became.

Another expression of trans-Atlantic respect was re-

ceived a few months later by Montgomery — a certificate of his having been constituted an honorary member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions by the payment of one hundred dollars from Henry Hill, Esq., of Boston, Massachusetts. It bears the date of January, 1832.

On the first of June appeared in two handsome octavo volumes, comprising upwards of a thousand pages, the “Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman, and George Bennett, Esq., deputed from the London Missionary Society to visit their various stations in the South Sea Islands, China, India, &c., between the years 1821 and 1829. Compiled from original documents by James Montgomery.” The work was illustrated with portraits of both the gentlemen of the Deputation, and about a dozen views of scenery, engraved from sketches made by Mr. Tyerman. In the preface the compiler thus alludes to the form and quality of the materials placed at his disposal:

“The documents, official and private, from which these volumes have been composed, were of great bulk, and exceedingly multifarious. They consisted of a journal kept by both members of the Deputation, jointly during the first two years of their travels, and a separate one by Mr. Tyerman, continued nearly to the day of his death. Mr. Bennett subsequently furnished several interesting narratives and other valuable contributions. These materials, however, were so extensive and miscellaneous, as well as so minute, that it became the duty of the compiler, instead of abridging or condensing the mass, to recompose the whole in such a form as should enable him to bring forth in succession, as they occurred to the travellers themselves, the most striking and curious facts relative to their per-

sonal adventures, or which came to their knowledge by the way."

This work, we can readily conceive, cost Montgomery a great amount of patient and painstaking labor; the authentic and valuable information which it gave of the Polynesian world, with its new forms of life, and its details of one of the most striking and successful experiments in the modern history of Christianity, make it a work of no common value.

Local causes limited its circulation in England. It was republished in this country, and read with the deepest interest; the spirit of missions received a new quickening, and, what was as good, it inspired increasing confidence in the practicability and permanency of missionary labor among the brethren.

In order to make a correct estimate of an individual, we seek to learn the prevailing tone of his mind, the unconscious influences which he exerts upon society, and the light in which he views passing events. These will disclose the "inner man," which is the only true and genuine man.

Intercourse, in a strong personal friendship, is not necessarily the best position for a clear discernment of character; for the partialities of friendship are likely to prove disturbing forces.

One remove from this is, perhaps, more favorable: when, in sympathy with a man's principles and the leading aim of his life, we can have access to a free, copious, and life-long correspondence, the natural out-gush of his opinions and feelings. It is from this stand-point, the reader has already perceived, that we have endeavored to direct his eye to Montgomery, in order to learn as far as possible, from *per-*

sonal intercourse, the character and environments of this Christian poet.

Letters, and paragraphs from letters, jottings by the way, therefore, form the body and chief interest of the present work. On them, floating fragments as they may seem, we flow down the current of his daily life.

No apology is therefore needed for drawing largely on his letters, although deficient, in common with all his prose, in simplicity, directness, and vigor of style; for they are the open windows of his soul, through which is breathed the refined and fervent spirit of the man.

He thus writes to Mr. Bennett:

"You must be aware, from the newspapers, that since the 8th of July, when the first case appeared, that new pestilence which both walketh in darkness and destroyeth at noon-day, — the fearful and mysterious cholera, — has been smiting down, on the right hand and on the left, men, women, children here. The last three or four days the number of new patients has been greatly increased beyond all former proportion, — a hundred since Tuesday, — though the mortality has not kept proportionate pace. The whole return this day, for four weeks and six days, is 352 cases, 122 deaths, 145 remaining. Coward as I am in nerve and muscle, I have been preserved from much more than *that* fear of death in which I live daily, even when the 'end of all things here' seems farthest off. But it is impossible for flesh and blood, united to soul and spirit, not to be deeply moved, and painfully sensible sometimes of that mortality which may be realized to the hardiest and healthiest of us in a moment. But I find this assurance in that book which contains the words of eternal life, — 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee.' God bless you!"

Again :

“I thank you for the amusing variety of newspapers, &c., which you inclosed—all different kinds of mirrors reflecting the aspect of the times [in relation to the question of Parliamentary Reform], in as many different ways, as to shape, color, expression, &c., according to the caprice of those who fashion such things. The real aspect of the times grows more and more *ominous*, to use a heathen word; more and more solemn and charged with warning, in Christian parlance. O may we be able to look at it ‘as seeing Him who is invisible,’ and thus be prepared for whatever it foretells, or whatever may befall, which indeed is more than the wisest observer of ‘the signs,’ concerning which so much is now said, can guess; clearly as the *foretelling* may be *ascertained* when the *issue* has arrived. ‘God moves in a mysterious way:’ let us stand still that we may see his salvation, or move at his signal,—to use your favorite (and approved from experience) figure,—as the pillar or the cloud, by day or by night, leads on. . . . I have been much occupied in my parlor alone, with preparing Dante and Ariosto for Dr. Lardner: the manuscripts of both have been sent to him.”

To the Rev. Samuel Dunn* he writes as follows, under date January 31, 1834:

“I thank you for the gift of your sermon on the Witness of the Spirit. It is a very able train of argument in favor of a doctrine which cannot be disproved, though many difficulties occur with respect to the interpretation of what *is the mode* in which that witness is certified to the be-

* Mr. Dunn was at this period one of the Wesleyan preachers stationed in Sheffield. He was expelled the Connexion at the Conference of 1849, along with Messrs. Everett and Griffith; and afterwards became the minister of an Independent congregation.

liever, or in which he receives it, and knows 'the sign infallible.' My own mind has been much, and often, and painfully exercised concerning that evidence so desirable, so necessary for inward peace, and a good hope through grace. After all, each must have the witness in himself: 'God is his own interpreter' here, as in other secret things, 'and he will make it plain.' But the experience of one man can be of no more avail to another than confirming the testimony of all who have in every age professed to enjoy it,—that there is such a thing. The Scripture, of course, decides the question as to the fact;—I am alluding to the evidence of it, whether I, for myself, have obtained that mercy or not. It is indeed, and must be in every case, like the possession of that 'white stone,' in which 'a new name is written, that no man knoweth, saving he who receiveth it.' And this stone is given by Him who sends the Comforter from the Father to those who are adopted, through faith in Him, into the family of God. My heart's desire and prayer for myself is, that as conviction of sin, godly sorrow, repentance, and faith, are all most unquestionably wrought in me by the Holy Spirit of God, He may also not let me rest satisfied with less assurance of being pardoned, accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified, than the Scriptures warrant me to expect, and consequently render it imperative upon me, at the peril of my soul and salvation, to ask and to seek, that I may receive and find.

"I must leave these few imperfect intimations of what has been and is to me a source of much spiritual conflict, as 'one of little faith.' *

* In order to an efficient belief in Christianity, a man must have been a Christian; and this is the seeming *argumentum in circulo*, incident to all spiritual truths, to every subject not presentable under the forms of time and space, as long as we attempt to master, by the reflex acts of the un-

"You who are strong will know how to pity, and perhaps to bear with my infirmity ; which I might call my besetting sin, were it not that so many others might dispute its claim to that distinction.

"I have no more doubt of the communion of the 'Holy Ghost' than I have of 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' or 'the love of the Father;' but I do not enjoy it as I ought, as I might, and as I pray daily that I may. I hail them blessed of the Lord who do so, and who believe with the heart fully unto righteousness."

In reply to an invitation to address a missionary meeting at Manchester, on Easter week (1834), he indicates something of the claims upon his time :

"Were I ever so well able otherwise to answer your call, I have *three* annual engagements every Easter Monday to detain me here, and 'a threefold cord is not soon broken.' Five or six and twenty chimney-sweepers' lads hold one of the twines ; I know not how many London missionaries another ; and, for aught I can tell, millions of heathen, among whom these labor, the third. In plain English, I have to attend a public missionary breakfast in the morning, and an anniversary meeting in the evening,—with the refreshing interlude of a dinner on roast beef and plum pudding, which for a *quarter of a century* a few of us have given to the climbing-boys of Sheffield."

The act for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies received the royal assent in August, 1833.

The provisions of that act are well known. Children under a certain age were made free at once ; while for the rest a plan of apprenticeship was adopted, to prepare both understanding, what we can only *know* by the act of *becoming*. "Do the will of my Father, and ye shall know whether I am of God."—COLERIDGE'S *Biog. Liter.*, vol. ii., p. 303.

master and slave for the new issues before them, extending to 1840, when slavery was absolutely to expire in the British possessions.

“As might be expected,” says the English biographer of Montgomery, “the 1st of August was a day of triumph and of gratitude with the friends of humanity in Great Britain, as well as with the negroes in the colonies. The muse of Montgomery was gladly and effectively invoked on the occasion; and his five spirited “Songs on the Abolition of Negro Slavery in the British Colonies” were sung not only at different occasions in the metropolis, but through the length and breadth of the land. The poet himself took personally an active part in the festival proceedings at Sheffield. In the forenoon the children belonging to the Lancasterian schools — nearly a thousand boys and girls — assembled to sing two of the hymns and listen to an address from him.”

In the evening he presided at a meeting, where about five hundred Christian friends, after taking tea together, listened to an address even more fervent and animating than that which had delighted the children in the morning. We may perpetuate in this page the substance of a single passage. Holding in his hand a large printed label with the words, — “Slavery Abolished, August 1, 1834. Thank God!” — the speaker said, “To God our thanks were especially due on this occasion for the glorious event he had wrought; for the abolition of slavery was not attributable either to patriots, politicians, or to poets, but to Christians, in their character as such; and especially was it to the successful efforts of the missionaries of religion that the negroes had been prepared in some degree for these blessings of freedom which could no longer be withheld. It was,” added Montgomery, “chiefly owing to Satan having

ensnared himself in his own toils, that the emancipation of the negroes resulted just now — his emissaries objecting to the preaching of the Gospel among the colored people on various estates, lest they should attain that knowledge which their masters despised, and by this means pass them by in morals and manners, at length asserted in so many words the great truth, that slavery and Christianity could not exist together. The very sentiment was the death knell of slavery: from the moment that expression was uttered, it was no longer a question, in heaven or upon earth, whether or not slavery should perish. Slavery, so far as Great Britain is concerned, has perished; and from this day another slave destined for our colonies shall never cross that ocean, from whose mysterious depths, hundreds, and probably thousands, who have been thrown overboard during the horrible ‘middle passage,’ shall rise up at the last trump, perhaps crying for mercy upon those who showed no mercy to the victims of their cupidity and their cruelty.”

It would have been almost an anomaly twenty years ago, for men, pretending to intelligence and piety, and not implicated in the pecuniary question of slavery, to have seriously urged its claims as a divine institution, and therefore to be perpetuated and extended. In relation to its moral character there was no debate. It is reserved to the superior discernment of divines and statesmen at the present day, to apprehend its divinities, since common sense and common Christianity have pronounced a unanimous verdict that it does not justly belong to the humanities of life.

A poet might well be inspired, who could sing, as did Montgomery in the following stanzas, a consummation so honorable to his country, so joyful in its Christian significance :

- “Ages, ages have departed,
 Since the first dark vessel bore
Afric's children, broken-hearted,
 To the Caribbèan shore ;
 She, like Rachel,
 Weeping, for they were no more.
- “Millions, millions have been slaughtered
 In the fight and on the deep ;
Millions, millions more have watered,
 With such tears as captives weep,
 Fields of travail
 Where their bones till doomsday sleep.
- “Mercy, Mercy, vainly pleading,
 Rent her garments, smote her breast,
Till a voice, from heaven proceeding,
 Gladdened all the gloomy west :
 ‘Come, ye weary !
 Come, and I will give you rest !’
- “Tidings, tidings of salvation !
 Britons rose with one accord,
Purged the plague-spot from our nation,
 Negroes to their rights restored :
 Slaves no longer,
 Free-men — Free-men of the Lord !”

CHAPTER XV.

INVITATION TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES—PROFESSORSHIP OF RHETORIC—MRS. HOFLAND—DORA WORDSWORTH'S ALBUM—THE MOUNT—SCOTT—LECTURING—LETTER TO MR. BENNETT—DEATH OF MR. HODGSON—CHRISTIAN CORRESPONDENT AT LONDON—DEATH OF ANNA GALES—LIFE OF SCOTT.

IN 1835, Mr. Bennett renewed an invitation to the poet, made a year or two before, to visit the United States, offering to defray the expenses of the journey. The offer was not without its strong attractions. Besides his friends, the Galeses, with whom a constant family intercourse had subsisted through the sisters, he could presume upon a cordial welcome from numerous others, to whom "he was unknown and yet known."

Two eminent Americans, "who being dead, yet speak," he had introduced to the English public, having written prefaces to the memoirs of Mrs. Huntington, of Boston, and the distinguished missionary, David Brainerd,—works republished by Collins, of Glasgow. No one could more fully appreciate their distinct and peculiar excellences. Marked women and blue-stockings, the poet dreaded. He loved the gentler and more womanly traits, blooming in social sweetness at home, and adorning the ways of the household with the tapestry of well-spent hours. Mrs. Huntington, "endowed with no splendid talents," and the

subject of no extraordinary incident, yet possessing something more excellent and attainable by all, a piety rising into grace, expanding into beauty, and flourishing in usefulness from infancy to youth, and youth to womanhood, he presented as a model to her sex. The preface was closed by a poem, published in his volumes under the title *Lot of the Riches*. In his essay on Brainerd, Montgomery refutes the maxim, "first civilize, then Christianize," confronting it with all the success which has attended missionary enterprise. The divine element, which so closely allied the missionary to the spiritual and unseen, and poured such a fervent efficacy into all his labors, no one could more fully comprehend and love.

But what answers does he make to the generous proposals of his friend?

"It is so much harder to say 'no' than 'yes,'" he says, yet "no" it was, for he was then engaged in preparing a new and uniform edition of his poems "at a moderate price, suited to the depreciated value of such commodities in the market." "And as his hands were a prisoner to the soil, so was his heart, the health of two very near and dear to him, Miss Gales and his brother Ignatius, being so very precarious that he dared not remove many hours from either."

And thus we, of America, lost the opportunity, this time and forever, of welcoming to our shores this gifted poet and eminent servant of God.

A public recognition of his literary worth appears this year, in Sir Robert Peel's placing his name, with those of Southey, Sharon Turner, Professor Airey, and Mrs. Somerville, on the pension list of the Literary Fund, to receive £150 a year, as a reward for service rendered to the department of letters.

The Professorship of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh being vacant, Montgomery was urged by his Scottish friends to apply for it, with their assurance of his success. The honor, however, he declined.

An article upon "Sheffield and its Poets," from the pen of Mrs. Hofland, thus mirrors him at this time :

"Montgomery is not only a poet in full possession of fame, and commanding the most extensive circle of readers that any poet can boast, but he is justly appreciated as a good man, of extraordinary capabilities, by his townsmen and the country at large. Nature, as if seconding the tardy justice of man in redeeming the past, has rendered him the very youngest man of his years ever beheld; for, had he not been known to the world as a poet thirty years, we really think he might at this very time pass for thirty—such is the slightness of his figure, the elasticity of his step, the smoothness of his fair brow, the mobility and playfulness of his features when in conversation. I was unfortunate in the period of my visit, it being that of the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodists, in consequence of which there was a great influx of strangers connected with that body; and as every one either calls on the great poet, or in some way angles for his company, who consider themselves more particularly entitled to the claim of Christian brotherhood, no wonder that at such a time he was half killed with engagements, and harassed with homage. To this were added charity bazaars, public meetings on bills in Parliament, and petitions from the church, all of which rendered him the busiest of the busy, transforming the gentle poet into the public man—so much the more must my heart thank him for the dear and valuable hour which he bestowed on me. . . . With the world, as to its gauds and luxuries, he has nothing to do; but with its sorrows,

ignorance, and want, he is continually engaged; and when Sir Robert Peel, to his own immortal honor, marked the sense himself and his countrymen entertained of Montgomery's merit, he only added to his power of benefiting his fellow-creatures, for of personal indulgence in expenditure he has no idea."

About midsummer, 1836, appeared the *Poetical Works of James Montgomery*, in three neat volumes. This, the first collated and uniform edition of all the poet at this time thought worthy of revision and reprint, comprised not only the matter of seven previous publications, but also above a score pieces which had been scattered through annuals and periodicals. The matter was also arranged under appropriate heads, and the price of the book was moderate, so that it had a large sale in comparison with that of the entire poems in their separate form.

One afternoon he found an album upon his table, asking for his autograph, and something more: no unusual circumstance, certainly; but this little volume possessed more than usual interest, for it belonged to Dora Wordsworth, and had been sent through a mutual friend to receive a contribution from his pen. Here were lines from Wordsworth, Southey, Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Coleridge, Campbell, De Quincey, and others. The attempt at a sonnet by Scott was characterized by tremulousness of hand, a melancholy tone of expression, and the unfinished state of some of the lines—having been written near the close of the author's life. Montgomery read it with deep feeling, and, closing the book, he said to a friend: "There we have almost the best written testimony of one of the most active and vigorous minds of the age, made in the very prospect of death, and yet there is not the slightest allusion to the promises of the Gospel, or the prospects of

the Christian ; but, instead, an equivocal allusion to enduring the stroke of Fate.”

The bachelor poet invoked the muse, and wrote the following :

“ TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ESQ.

“ Immortal offspring thou wilt leave behind,
 * To track the waves, and travel on the wind ;
 In lettered forms o’er every land to spread,
 Where mind expatiates or where fancy’s bred ;
 Companions of the fair, the wise, the good,
 Far as their mother-tongue is understood,
 Long as their father-spirit shall inspire,
 Heart-hid emotion, soul-expanding fire,
 And, like the elements of nature, give
 Life to things dead — life’s life to things that live.
 But thou hast offspring nobler far than these,
 Born to survive the heavens, the earth, the seas ;
 And she to whom this precious book belongs,
 Shall be yet more immortal than thy songs :
 These, though they bear through every age and clime
 Thy name and praise till the last breath of Time,
 Yet must their written scroll, when he expires,
 Drop from his hand into the final fires.
 Oh ! then, may she, like morning from the womb
 Of darkness, issuing from her long night-tomb,
 Behold the terror with rejoicing eyes,
 Caught up to meet her Saviour in the skies,
 And with his saints, a glorious company,
 Hold round the throne eternal jubilee !

“ This for thy daughter, Wordsworth, is my prayer :
 Next for thyself — mayst thou that mercy share,
 Nor one that either loves be wanting there !

“ J. M.

“ The Mount, November 3, 1836.”

This courtesy was promptly and gracefully acknowledged by the bard of Ambleside in the following terms :

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Yesterday were received at Rydal Mount, through the kindness of Mr. Younge, your volumes ; and the little book belonging to my daughter, which you have been so good as to enrich with a most valuable contribution. For these tokens of your regard, and for the accompanying letter, accept our joint thanks. I can assure you with truth, that from the time I first read your *Wanderer of Switzerland*, with the little pieces annexed, I have felt a lively interest in your destiny as a poet ; and though much out of the way of new books, I have become acquainted with your works, and with increasing pleasure, as they successively appeared. It might be presumptuous in me were I to attempt to define what I hope belongs to us in common ; but I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of expressing a firm belief that neither morality nor religion can have suffered from our writings ; and with respect to *yours*, I know that both have been greatly benefited by them. Without convictions of this kind, all the rest must in the latter days of an author’s life appear to him worse than vanity. My publisher has been directed to forward to you (I suppose it will be done through Messrs. Longman) the first volume of my new edition, and the others as they successively appear. As the book could not be conveniently sent to you through my hands, I have ventured to write a few lines upon a slip of paper to be attached to it, which I trust will give you a pleasure akin to what I received from the lines written by your own hand on the fly-leaf of your first volume. With earnest wishes that time may deal gently with you as life declines,

and that hopes may brighten and faith grow firmer as you draw nearer the end of your earthly course,

“I remain, my dear sir, faithfully yours,

“W. WORDSWORTH.

“Pray excuse my employment of an amanuensis; my eyes require that help which Mrs. Wordsworth is ever ready to give.

“James Montgomery, Esq., The Mount, Sheffield.”

Hartshead, so commodious and attractive to the youthful adventurer forty-three years before, has grown old and dingy. Comfort, elegance, and fashion have left it to the encroachments of smoke and time, and gone to cleaner portions of the city. Thither Montgomery, with his adopted sisters, removes, and makes a new home at The Mount, a block of newly erected houses, beautifully situated on a swell of land skirting the south side of the city.

There we now find him, at sixty-five, in the zenith of his reputation, surrounded by comfort and friends, with health and motive for sufficient exertion to keep his heart young and his head clear, a ripe old English gentleman.

Many who began life with him have fallen by the way.

Coleridge's glorious sun had set in clouds.

Scott, after drinking deeper draughts from the goblet of fame than man ever drank before, like the master of a sumptuous feast, awoke to the desolate forlornness of the next morning, — to find himself a bankrupt, — and a bankrupt he died, in everything but his cheery temper and undying fame.

Southey is nearing those sorrows which finally crushed him.

Montgomery, with a constitution naturally delicate, is

indeed capable of doing a greater amount of work than ever. Manifold are his labors; not are the quiet, graver pursuits more suited to the sober and conservative period of age; rather the alert activities of a man profoundly interested in all the onward movements of the time.

Many a bright vision of reform has perished; confidence in men and measures has received many a blow; the world more slowly apprehends the right, and more tardily still is disposed to follow it, than he ever supposed; the heats of passion and the jealousy of party blacken what is good, brighten what is bad: good men are often allied to bad measures, and good measures are often successful through bad men. Yet for all this, Montgomery does not wilfully or impatiently cast himself on a lower platform of principles or policy: nor is he willing to abandon what cannot be easily accomplished; he believes in men, and labors for their improvement. He believes in God, and trusts the righteousness of his providence. The brooding, distrustful, self-accusing spirit of earlier days has given place to a calm, hopeful, joyous trust in God:

“With only such degree of sadness left
As may support longings of pure desire;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave.”

And so, like one

— “Accustomed to desires that feed
On fruitage gathered from the Tree of Life;
To hopes on knowledge and experience built;—
In whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith,”

a middle life of usefulness and enjoyment is passing to a tranquil and devout old age.

Amid the hurry and confusion of moving, he was under the necessity of preparing a course of Lectures upon the British Poets, promised to Manchester and Leeds, concerning whose reception he writes to a friend :

“At Manchester and in Leeds, by the testimonies of the councils of the Institutions in both places, my lectures have been so well received as to have commanded unusually large audiences; indeed, in the latter town, they could hardly have been larger on the last three evenings. I may say, myself, that the audiences have been of the highest respectability, and I have been heard by all with a measure of favor and indulgence which it becomes me to attribute rather to their liberality than to the merit of my papers. It is, however, a circumstance not a little gratifying under the present discouragement of elegant literature, and the absolute depression of poetry, to find that persons actively engaged in the pursuits of *prosperous* commerce, are (so many of them at least) willing to spare an hour, now and then, from profit and loss, for the pleasure and improvement which may be derived (under better teaching than mine) from lessons on ‘the divinest of human arts,’ as I have presumed to call that which I profess to expound, — and in my humble way to practise, so as, if possible, innocently to entertain my hearers. Forgive this egotism, which if anywhere in place is surely so in a letter.”

As a public speaker, we find his engagements are numerous. He lectures frequently before the Literary Institutions of some of the principal cities in the kingdom, with very considerable pecuniary profit; and is a favorite pleader in behalf of Benevolent Institutions of the Church, for whose growth and success he had felt almost a father's care.

The following letter, dated January 27, 1837, was addressed to George Bennett :

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“These lines must be few, but they bear the heaviest burden with which I have ever had to charge a letter to you. Before I name the occasion, you will already have anticipated it. This day at noon our endeared and inestimable friend Rowland Hodgson entered into the joy of his Lord. After such a life of suffering, what must the first moment be to the redeemed spirit emancipated from that house of bondage, the perishing body, and brought indeed into the glorious liberty of the children of God, in the very kingdom of his Father and the personal presence of that Saviour whom while unseen he loved, and in whom, now that he does see Him eye to eye, he rejoices and shall for ever rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory! To us who are still strangers and pilgrims on earth, yet, I humbly hope, inquiring our way to Zion, with our faces thitherward and our hearts already there, where our treasure is — or we are utterly, hopelessly, and everlastingly poor — the world, as I sung ten years ago, in a poem commenced in mind in our late friend’s carriage while we were travelling together, the world to me ‘grows darker, lonelier, and more silent, as I descend into the vale of years.’ One light which has long cheered, and I may say accompanied, me through one third of my way of life, is now gone out — no, no, not *out*, it has passed *on* before through the shadow of death into the splendor of eternity: but I shall miss it; and O! how many more whom its mild beams were wont to bless will miss it too! But the Lord liveth — He gave and He has taken away — blessed be his name! To none but Him would we have surrendered it, and submitted to the bereavement. But He who doeth all things well, cannot have done otherwise in respect to us on this occasion; while the departed, whom we must lament

on our own account as frail human creatures, how has he already learnt that all things while he was in the body *did*, moment by moment, without intermission, work together for *his* good! and why? — ah! there is the point that concerns us as survivors, if we would secure the same blessedness for ourselves — *because he loved God*. So may *we*, and so may the Lord help *us* to do! I am too much bewildered with the effect of this stroke, which, though I have been expecting it from day to day for three weeks past, yet stunned my faculties as though it were sudden. Death always *is* sudden when it comes at last; for, how long or how much soever foreseen and apprehended, the *reality* of it is as different from the anticipation as life and death are themselves distinct. Forgive, therefore, the little coherence of the foregoing remarks, which are but the imperfect expression of feelings and sentiments, themselves but momentary fragments crowding and flitting away, while the mind is scarcely more than passively conscious, and the heart hardly yet sensible of the actual distress that for a long time — if time be yet allowed to me much longer — must afflict it when the loss which I have sustained comes to be *experienced*: at present it is but known as a fact — as that which has occurred and never can be reversed. I must give over. I did not intend to touch this page, but as I am forced upon it, I will just add that our friends at Park Grange within these two days have been visited with the prevailing influenza. Thousands of families here are afflicted by it, so far as I can learn; but, on the whole, the symptoms appear to be milder than they have manifested themselves in your great city. None of our connexions, I believe, have been severely handled by it. We have escaped in this house hitherto.

“I am truly, your affectionate friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.”

Mr. Bennett has written upon this letter, "R. Hodgson is gone to *his Lord*. Oh! for grace to follow him, as he followed our common Lord."

At the beginning of February appeared the "Christian Correspondent: Letters, Private and Confidential, addressed to Relatives and others, by pious Persons of both Sexes, eminent for their Talents, or peculiar Circumstances in Life, exemplifying the Fruits of Holy Living, and the Blessedness of Holy Dying." These letters, forming three volumes, were introduced by a "Preliminary Essay" from the pen of Montgomery — at whose suggestion, indeed, the work itself was undertaken by the publishers, "to one of whom he had casually remarked," Mr. Holland goes on to tell us, "that he had often met with letters by people, great and good in their day, which, though never intended for any eyes but those of their respective correspondents, were, nevertheless, often the more interesting and precious on that very account; and especially were they worthy of preservation, as introducing us into the privacy of distinguished individuals, who, on general occasions, acted, spoke, wrote, and even thought as in the sight and audience of their contemporaries, and of posterity; consequently, in some measure, at least, under restraint. In the freedom of epistolary intercourse, they poured into the faithful ear of friends and kindred their joys and their sorrows; and showed themselves, as they appeared in their families and amidst society at large, men of like passions with ourselves, engaged in the business, the cares, and the charities of ordinary life; at the same time, by glimpses and allusions, unconsciously revealing the inmost secrets of their hearts; and this, whether the topics are religious or otherwise — so that at the distance of centuries they may be known, not only as they desired to be seen, or even as they

were seen by their every-day and incurious acquaintance, but as they actually were *in* themselves and *to* themselves. It was moreover truly intimated at the same time, that the familiar letters of illustrious individuals of bygone times, who may be known otherwise only by the imperfect records of history—the overcharged portraits drawn of them by biographers, or (if authors) perhaps by their own elaborate literary performances, have an interest exceedingly attractive, and afford intelligence concerning the writers, which is not only gratifying to innocent curiosity, but delightfully and practically instructive to those who love to study human nature in its elements and eccentricities—to trace its general correspondence and its individual diversities. It is thus that one mind is compared with another mind as contemplated under similar aspects; while each is brought to the test of our own reason, so far as self-knowledge, experience, and observation enable us to judge with candor and impartiality.”

We believe that Montgomery’s colleague in this undertaking, so far as the selection of the larger portion of the matter, and the arrangement of the whole is concerned, was Mr. Henry Rogers, whose contributions to the “Edinburgh Review” have been separately printed, and who has gained deserved popularity from his “Eclipse of Faith.” The letters are selected with discrimination and taste; and were, on the whole, satisfactory to the originator of the work. He was, at first, inclined to doubt the advantage of distributing them under certain general heads with reference to *subject*, instead of arranging them simply according to their *dates*; but on reconsidering the matter, he appeared to coincide with the views of the editor in favor of a classification. The “Preliminary Essay” displays in a considerable degree that delicate perception of the latent

beauties of the materials before him, and that peculiar felicity in pointing them out, which had characterised his efforts in previous compositions of a like nature.

The leading idea, which appears to have been present to the mind of the editor, was, that —

"In confidential epistolary correspondence, people are more really themselves than in any other way of exercising their faculties in reference to their fellow-creatures; and these memorials," he adds, "have the advantage, not only of being

‘ Warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires,’

but they are positive acts, not mere records; and the revealing of the writers in their real characters, though, perhaps, as imperceptible, is yet as gradual and manifest, at comparative intervals, as any of the operations of nature throughout the animal or vegetable kingdoms, in the growth of what is palpable, and the development of what is concealed." "Whatever a man says of himself is genuine; whether it be true or false, it is equally his own. Even in hypocrisy he is no hypocrite, for deceit is natural; if he assumes a virtue which he has not, he exposes a vice which he has; if he pretends to talents which he does not possess, he disproves his claim by the inability with which he asserts it. One part of his character he may conceal, but the very act of concealment betrays another; if he cover his breast with both his hands, he may be showing us that they are not clean; if he turns away his head to hide his face, perhaps he is discovering to us his baldness behind. Let him represent himself as he will, we shall see him more clearly as he is than any other man could have represented him."

It is the opinion of Thomas De Quincey (the "English

Opium Eater") that "amongst all the celebrated letter-writers of past or present times, a large overbalance happens to have been men;" at the same time he admits that, "more frequently women write from their hearts—and this very cause operates to make female letters good."

Montgomery appears to have entertained a similar opinion, for towards the close of a section in reply to the question, "why are the letters of women, for the most part, more frank and agreeable than those of men?" he says, "where they give their confidence at all, they give it heartily."

In May, 1837, we follow him to London, and again find him at the Royal Institution lecturing upon the Principal British Poets.

The six lectures comprise the following subjects:—Lecture 1. Introduction.—A View of the Present State of Poetry and General Literature in this Country. Lecture 2. Strictures on the earlier British Poets from the Reign of Edward III., including Langlande, Chaucer, Gower, &c. Lecture 3. British Poets of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, including Skelton, Surrey, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, &c. Lecture 4. British Poets of the Seventeenth Century continued, including Cowley, Butler, Milton, Dryden, Prior, Addison, &c. Lecture 5. British Poets of the Eighteenth Century, including Parnell, Pope, Thomson, Young, Churchill, Akenside, &c. Lecture 6. British Poetesses.—British Poets of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, including Burns, Cowper, Crabbe, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, and Coleridge, with brief references to some living Poets, — Wordsworth, Southey, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, &c.

"The proprietor of the 'Metropolitan Magazine,' says his English biographer, "was anxious to have purchased

the MS. of the lectures for publication in that periodical, distributing the matter over the ensuing twelvemonths' numbers. The remuneration proposed was so liberal that the author would at once have closed with the offer, had he not experienced some misgivings, in the first place, as to whether they were really worth the sum offered; and, in the next place, whether he ought, considering what was due to his own reputation, to give them to the public, even through such a medium, without first subjecting them to a more leisurely and rigid revision than the occasion afforded him a chance of bestowing. A part of the first lecture he did, indeed, consent thus to dispose of. We believe he received fifty guineas for the delivery of the lectures before the Royal Institution. His spare time during this visit to the metropolis was, for the most part, divided between the claims of his relatives at Woolwich, and those of his old friend George Bennett, Esq., at Hackney. It was chiefly in consequence of the latter association that he was induced to take a part as a speaker at the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society, the only benevolent institution (with a single exception, perhaps) whose anniversary his over-cautious timidity did not prevent him from attending."

"The last five days," he writes to Mr. Holland, "have advanced the season more than the sun had done in all his journey through the first sign of the year; renewing its youth as it was wont to do in former ages, but as of late it has rarely done till much later. With me, the only intimation of youth *to be* renewed is the decay of nature. I have, indeed, no *cause* to complain, except a *disposition* to complain,—the worst of all possible causes, where murmuring is ingratitude, and less than the most fervent gratitude is impiety. My daily prayer is to have—next to

‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’—a thoughtful heart, and a meek and quiet spirit, resigned wholly to *his* will, who alone knows what is good for me, and who alone can do any good to me.

“I have been called upon to attend two private meetings for our Moravian missions, and a public one for another beautiful charity—for the relief of widows in the first month of their affliction and bereavement—during the past week. Several others have *been* in my way, but I have *made* it in my way to pass by on the other side. Indeed, I must avoid as many occasions of this kind as possible—both flesh and spirit fail me, and I never dare engage in such services now, except when I dare not desert, though a pressed man. To-day is the great Wesleyan Annual [Missionary] Meeting at Exeter Hall; and I have willfully kept out of sight of my friends in that Connexion, that they might not, out of courtesy, ask me to take part at the meetings to come.

“Ever since you left us I have been involved, beyond the average number, with meetings, anniversaries, and committees connected with such and other public engagements, so that I have had little time and less spirit to *do* or *get* any good, by choice, in any other way; and if I have failed either to *get* or *do* on these occasions, my days and weeks have been woefully misspent. Perhaps, however, it is well for me to be thus exercised; it would be, I know, if I rightly improved these—what shall I call them?—*providential accidents* of my situation in life,—a long-standing among my townspeople here, and a certain character which has grown upon me rather than grown out of me, because I am one of ‘those who *appear* righteous before men;’ but ‘God knoweth my *heart*.’ O, how humbling ought these awful words of our Saviour to be to me!

and how ought I to fear and tremble, yea, even when I rejoice, to tremble, and lie in the dust at his feet, lest, after all, his last word to me should be 'depart!' . . . I thank you for your over-sea stanzas on American freedom and American slaveholding. Mr. George Thompson is here now, *incensing* us on the latter subject, as well as upon the atrocious violations of faith on the part of our own colonists, in too many instances, respecting that new and anomalous form of slavery — slavery hideous in all its shapes, and most hideous in disguise — under the legal fiction of apprenticeship."

Summer and autumn glide on with noiseless flow, with little for our pen to record, in its fragmentary snatches of human life; yet no blanks are they in the Book of Remembrance.

Winter brings more than weather chills to the Mount: Death follows hard on the new year; Anna Gales sickens and dies.

"January 18, 1838.

"We are one less at the Mount," writes Montgomery to Mr. Holland. "We are, however, not as those who sorrow without hope. I must not trust my heart to my hand, or I know not whither it might be carried at this time. Sarah [Gales] is pretty well; but — as it could not, it ought not to be otherwise — deeply distressed. Dear Anna [Gales] departed yesterday morning soon after four o'clock. With her yet in body amongst us we seem to be living between the two worlds, in each of which she has now a portion. Ours is yet in this; but all that we have to do, including the fulfillment of every duty to God and our neighbor, under every change of circumstances, is to prepare for our departure — that, when called at any mo-

ment, we may arise and go hence, for this is not our rest ; but there remaineth a rest for the people of God. Among these may we — you — all, all we love, be found here, and then, there and forever, we shall be with the Lord.”

To George Bennett he writes again, January 23, 1838 :

“ Yesterday I followed to her last home all that was left of my beloved companion, my sister in soul, though alien by blood, when her spirit returned to God who gave it, and broke the threefold cord that had bound herself, her sister, and me in domestic affection for more than five and forty years. We laid her to rest in the church-yard of Eekington, her native village, where her kindred of three generations have been progressively gathered to their unrecorded fathers, who lived before them in the same neighborhood. . . . She rests in peace, I humbly trust, in the presence of her Redeemer. For years past her simple ingenuous piety and sincere devotion, according to the knowledge of divine things which she had received, and which she embraced, I verily believe, according to the convictions wrought by the Spirit of God upon her heart and mind — these have been to me a source of hope for her through life, and are still the ground of faith in the power of the Gospel as the power of God to her, that she is now one of the redeemed before the throne. This one subject, which has in other respects been predominant in my thoughts while the process of mortality was going forward and under my very eyes for the last month, has occupied all my paper ; and less I found not means to say, though I seem to have said so little, that you will very imperfectly comprehend through what a course of sorrows and consolations, wonderfully and blessedly mingled in the same cup, her dear sister and I have been lately led. All, all I

must conclude is well, because I cannot find a Scripture that will — understood in its plainest meaning — allow me to doubt that she is as far beyond suffering and death as pure spirit can be in heaven. Sarah joins me in kindest regards, and good wishes for your health and happiness through many new years to come — if it be the Lord's will ; and if not, for something better still — soul-health and happiness to all eternity.”

“ You mention Lockhart's ‘ Life of Walter Scott,’ ” says Montgomery : “ few books, indeed, have I ever read which gave me so much of that gratification which, as an adventurer in literature myself, I eagerly seek in the biography of any of the master-minds of their age, and especially of our own country. But I cannot express — and if I could I would not — the strange misgivings that haunted me through every stage of his marvellous fortune — marvellous in its prosperity, and more marvellous in its reverse ; the chances of both extremes meeting in *one* person being millions of millions of times more beyond probability than was the unexampled success which he attained — though that was itself beyond all calculation ; no other in any age or country having reaped such golden harvests from the mere market value of the commodities which he brought out for sale, as this mighty man of the North ; — I say I was haunted with a dreary misgiving concerning the result of his labors to himself, feeling that all could not be right within, while there is much of what is wrong in the most popular of his productions. I am not his judge, therefore I condemn him not, but lament that his ten talents were not wholly so employed that his master could in reference to all of them, say, ‘ Well done, good and faithful servant ! ’ What a different world would it be if we all, from ten talents down to the tenth of one talent, could say, in the

day of our account, 'Lord, that which thou gavest I have occupied; and there is thine own with usury!' Would not such a consummation—such a consecration of God's gifts to God's glory—go far towards the fulfillment of millennial prophecies and Paradise Restored?"

March 8. He was reading the sixth volume of the "Life of Scott. "It really," said he, "makes one almost unwilling to die, when one sees how the very secret thoughts of an individual, if he happened to leave any private record of them, are exposed to public gaze and scrutiny after the writer's death. I believe I never wrote a line of a *diary* in my life. Scott, to and through his heart's core, was, with all his genius, a thoroughly worldly-minded man: he does, indeed, sometimes mention the Bible with respect in a general way; but there can be no doubt that he hated what we are accustomed to call—and very properly call—*evangelical religion*. He has some flippant, not to say irreverent remarks, on the opinion that good people make the bliss of heaven to consist chiefly in singing; an employment which, it seems, would not be welcome to *him*. The fact is, holy men, even the simplest of them, are very rarely guilty of excess in the notion thus attributed to them: indeed, why *should* they be? since nearly all that the Scriptures authorise us to conclude of the state and place of the happy departed, comes within the meaning of four words—light, music, society, and, especially, rest; and these, in some of their modifications, will be found to constitute nearly the entire subject of the 'Paradiso' of Dante."

To George Bennett, under date of March 17, 1838:

". . . I have once more to acknowledge the fresh obligation which you offer to lay upon me, and to none living am I more willing to be under an obligation than to

yourself; but without assigning one of the ninety-nine reasons which cut off the probability, not to say possibility, of visiting Hackney *this* year (and in the whole calendar of time there is no year *but* this, since the past have been, and the future are not), I can only accept the invitation in my heart, and hope to enjoy the pleasure of it in the spirit, should I be spared to see the swallows and hear the cuckoo again. I am under an engagement to visit Bristol for a few days in May on a missionary anniversary, and again in October, for a fortnight, to deliver my lectures there on the 'British Poets.' My spirits have been and continue too much depressed by personal troubles, as well as by late domestic afflictions, to allow me to look beyond the morrow (with the exceptions afore-mentioned); and daily mercies alone enable me to go softly on my way of life, as one with whom the end of all things is at hand, and who has needed to be sober and watchful unto prayer, lest, after all the long-suffering and loving-kindness of God my Saviour towards me, I be at last a castaway. At Hull several friends (especially Mr. James Bowden and his family connections) inquired very kindly after you. I am obliged by your extract from Lesche's 'Polar Discoveries,' because it shows how kindly attentive you are to my credit as an author. I have not seen the publication, but I am sufficiently acquainted both with the northern histories and traditions respecting East Greenland to know that it is difficult to distinguish fact from fable in them, and to make both bend to my purpose as a rhymers. Cottle's 'Recollections of Coleridge' I read with peculiar interest, having had personal acquaintance with the biographer, and no ordinary feeling of curiosity to learn more of the actual character of the most mysterious of the master spirits of our age, as influencing its literature. Lockhart's 'Memoirs

of Walter Scott' at present absorb my whole soul in reading them volume by volume. His history is more intensely attractive to my mind, and in itself even more marvellous, than any of his fictions either in verse or prose."

CHAPTER XVI.

VICTORIA ON THE BRITISH THRONE—REJOICINGS AT SHEFFIELD—APPEAL FOR THE POOR—LETTER TO A “FAR WEST” COLLEGE—AT BRISTOL—LECTURING TOUR—CENTENARY OF METHODISM—REV. WILLIAM JAY’S JUBILEE—DEATH OF IGNATIUS MONTGOMERY.

A YOUTHFUL sovereign ascended the British throne in 1838, a maiden queen, before whom all hearts in the realm bowed in loyal homage. Never were coronation festivities celebrated with more hearty and universal cordiality. Processions, illuminations, dinners, suppers, balls, soirees, animated old England, with less of the bacchanalian jollity of the olden time, and more of the rational, genuine enjoyment, becoming a higher tone of national intelligence and morality.

Sheffield was not behind its sister cities in the expressions of the day. Beside the salutes and decorations which heralded and adorned the occasion, a public soiree was held at Cutler’s Hall, at which Montgomery was invited to contribute by his presence and his pen. On the afternoon of the 28th of June, four hundred gentlemen and ladies of every shade of religious opinion sat down to table, at which the venerable poet presided, with Miss Sarah Gales on one side, and a beautiful niece on the other.

Tea being over, he arose and addressed the meeting in a tone of remark befitting a gallant, Christian gentleman:

“Her Majesty,” he said, in closing, “the first of a line of sovereigns since a maiden Queen filled the throne, has succeeded to an empire on the face of which, between the rising and setting sun, there exists not one slave among the hundred and twenty millions of her subjects; for whatever tyranny may be exercised under the name of *apprenticeship* in the West Indies, every man, woman, and child in those islands, by law as well as by equity, is free. . . . My heart’s desire and prayer is that the reign of Victoria may be rendered more illustrious than that of any one of her predecessors in their day, by being a reign of mercy, a reign of peace; so that wherever the ensigns of her authority appear, they may be the pledges of her benignity, not to her subjects alone, but to all kindreds and nations with whom she is in concord.”

In the course of the evening, the spirited ode — “The Sceptre in a Maiden Hand,” was sung by the choir to the air of “Rule Britannia,” which was received with rapturous applause.

While these festivities were enlivening the higher, the poet was not unmindful of humbler circles. Accordingly he wrote and circulated the following appeal:

“*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing may be lost.*”

“So said our Saviour after he had fed five thousand men in the wilderness with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and so will all his followers do whenever they have opportunity. Tens of thousands of our townspeople will be feasted by their friends, their employers, or from their own abundance, on the coronation day of our most gra-

cious sovereign Victoria. Let it then be indeed ‘a good day,’ ‘a day of feasting and joy, and of sending portions to one another, *and gifts to the poor.*’ (Esther, ix. 17–20). Among the latter, let us not forget *the poorest of the poor*, —the old, infirm, and desolate of that sex to which our young and lovely Queen belongs; and while we ‘eat the fat and drink the sweet,’ let us ‘send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.’ (Nehemiah, viii. 9.) The visitors of the Aged Female Society purpose on the day after the coronation (Friday, the 29th instant) to invite the venerable objects of this benevolent institution to take tea with them (by favor of the master cutler) at the Cutler’s Hall; that these — the *youngest* of whom is more than *thrice*, and the greater number *four times* the age of her Majesty — may have a day of humble feasting and as hearty gladness as the youngest and strongest of those on whom Providence has bestowed gifts more abounding. Let such then but contribute the value of the crumbs that fall from their well-spread tables on that day of universal hospitality, and their mites cast into the treasury will be sufficient to furnish ‘the widow and her who has none to help her,’ with an evening’s entertainment which will be remembered with gratitude to the last evening of her long and suffering life. The funds of the charity are so limited, that less than fourpence per week is all that can be afforded, on the average, to each of its poor objects. It cannot, however, be doubted, that the compassionate liberality of its well-wishers will enable the ladies of the committee *to make three hundred old hearts happy*, at a season when millions of all ages and conditions throughout the British Empire will be rejoicing together.”

This appeal was not in vain. About twenty pounds were collected, and a bouncing bottle of Jamaica rum, which had

not come into the poet's account. Its seeming unavailability sorely puzzled him ; it was finally exchanged for wine, and Montgomery and his friends, the next day, with three hundred poor, elderly women, drank the health of their fair, young Queen.

"Among the myriads of feastings throughout the land," he said, "I doubt whether there was one at which more genuine and hearty delight was felt than at the tea-drinking which we gave to the Aged Female Society."

"We've all been queens to-day !" said one poor woman in the joy of her heart.

The middle of this year, Montgomery received a diploma of complimentary membership from a society in the United States' "far West."

"Some time since," replies the poet, "I was favored with a communication from you in behalf of the —— Society of —— College, in the 'far West.' The latter phrase, which occurs at the beginning of your letter, has more poetry in it than all the four quartos besides. *Onward! onward! onward!* is your one text, and the history of all generations to come will be its interminable commentary. Nothing — amidst all the labors and enterprises of your countrymen, consisting of as many tongues — is of more value and importance, nor will any be more permanently beneficial and influential, than those in which you and your associates are so honorably engaged. For just in proportion as learning — from the highest, the 'knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ,' through all the gradations of science and literature, to the humblest rudiments of instruction in the log-hut or the forest sanctuary — just in proportion as learning, thus comprehensively understood,

is successfully promulgated, will the glory, the happiness, and the security of your nation and her institutions be confirmed, promoted, and perpetuated. The literature of both countries is yours, and that which is of native growth with you will pay ample interest for the capital stock of our rearing, through eight centuries, which you have borrowed from us—that is, if you do justice to yourselves, and emancipate your literature as you have emancipated your territory from our yoke, however light, and even honorable to bear, that may be. Our standards of excellence will ever be yours, as well as ours; and the most that either of us can do will be to rival them; but we must each do this in our own way: your literature, therefore, must be no longer *colonial*, but *national*, as all else in your polity is. You have indeed some noble examples, both in prose and rhyme (but more especially in the former), of indigenous production, which must at once be recognized as American in style, subject, and spirit, yet pure in the dialect of our best models of the last fifty years. The diffusion of our common language—not only over North America, but sown, as the seeds of it are, in every quarter of the globe as formerly divided, and throughout Australia and Polynesia—is an animating consideration to those who seek through literature to obtain ‘an honest fame or none.’ It has truly been one of the sweetest rewards of the sacrifices which I have made to be enrolled among poets,—how brief soever my immortality among men may be,—to learn from many pens and voices of the West, and the ‘far West,’ that I have not labored in vain, though I chose neither a popular nor a fashionable, nor even a classical walk of composition in which to try my powers. The recognition of my humble claims by the youth of — College has been one more gratifying seal of my comparative

success. So far as I have striven lawfully for distinction, may each of your candidates follow my steps, but with greater and happier results to himself and mankind ! ”

On the 5th of October Montgomery left Sheffield for Bristol, to deliver, before the members of the Philosophical Society in that city, his course of six lectures on the British Poets, which were received with a degree of eclat as little expected by the poet himself as it seems to have been anticipated by the gentlemen who engaged him. In one of the local journals he was greeted with an address in rhyme, which ended with these lines :

“Thrice welcome to our city, bard beloved !
Patriot and Christian, honored and approved !
Thou know’st her worth — hast sung her Reynolds’ praise,
In warm and generous, unforgotten lays ;
And, as some mother whose belovéd son
Hath from a stranger gracious honors won,
Looks she on thee ; but here that name must end, —
No stranger now, but ever dear — a friend ! ”

In the first week of December he went to Birmingham, and commenced the delivery of the same course, before “one of the largest and most respectable audiences ever seen assembled on a similar occasion within the walls of the Philosophical Institution.”

“I have not written earlier,” he writes to Mr. Holland from Birmingham, at the close of 1838, “for two very sufficient reasons — I really had nothing to write about, and I have had no time to write about nothing. Never, I may say, have I been more actively engaged than it has been my lot to be from the peculiar pressure of circumstances since the beginning of October, either at home in connection with the new and unexpectedly prosperous plan of

establishing a House of Recovery at Sheffield, or abroad in delivering my lectures on the principal British Poets at Bristol, Birmingham, and Worcester. The impunity with which I bore the physical labor, and the success which accompanied the intellectual exercises of this undertaking in the former city, emboldened me to venture upon the experiment of repeating the same exertions here, as well as making three visits to Worcester in the intervals of each week. From the newspapers you will have learned that here I have been most cordially welcomed and countenanced by such audiences as it is a delight to look upon from behind a reading-desk, lending all their eyes and all their ears, with all their hearts too, when a feeble thing like me is fervently and honestly endeavoring to please them indeed, but to do them good also in pleasing them."

The year 1839 followed on with its manifold engagements.

". . . . During the months of April and May," he writes in July to Mr. Bennett, "I was much from home, and though hospitable friends made me a home wherever I was cast as a stranger, yet being from my own fireside, my time was necessarily occupied day by day in what the day required me to do, to suffer, or to enjoy, — for every day has sufficient of each to make me humble, diligent, and thankful. At Newark, Grandham, Lincoln, and Nottingham I delivered Lectures, which in each place were well attended. In May I went to Bristol to a missionary meeting, and immediately on my return entered upon a series of engagements of a similar kind in Stafford, from which I am just cleared.

"To-morrow (19th of June, 1839), it will be fifty years since I took a step which turned the whole course of my life into a channel entirely contrary to its early and proper destination.

“What I have thus forfeited, what I have thus lost, in time and for eternity, He only can know who sees all things as they are, as they might have been, and as they ought to be. Fifty years ago I *cast myself* away — but *He* did *not* cast me away. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, through all my wanderings; and it is yet possible — for with God all things are possible — that I may dwell in his house for ever. Amen! Amen! So be it! And *there* may I meet you and all whom we have loved that are gone thither already, and all whom we love, and are yet on the way! The first of my hymns in the ‘Christian Psalmist,’ beginning ‘I left the God of truth and light,’ was written on the anniversary of that apostate act of sin, of folly, and of shame, in 1807 — sixteen years after I had committed it.”

On the 25th of October of the same year, the Wesleyans, not only in Great Britain but in every quarter of the world, celebrated the “Centenary of Methodism” with appropriate religious services, including the singing of a hymn “A hundred years ago,” composed for the occasion by Montgomery, and published, with musical accompaniments by different parties, at the beginning of the year.

“On that day,” said he, in a missionary speech a month afterwards, “from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, and in different lands throughout his entire circuit round the globe, there had not been one hour, through the four-and-twenty, in which, from some portion of the Wesleyan body, had not been ascending to heaven — glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men! On that day the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ had been abundantly poured upon the congregations, and families, and individual members who entered

into the spirit of that religious commemoration. But while the praises of that hallowed day were for the past, the prayers of the faithful were put up for the blessing of God on the succeeding century. Not one of the assembly present will witness the termination of the century just commenced ; but their children may then be living — and what will be the state of the world at that time ? Assuredly, if the Spirit of God so prosper the work during the present as He has done during the past century — if you and your successors labor and pray as your fathers have done, the triumphs of the Redeemer, achieved through his instrumentality, at the close of another hundred years, will be celebrated not only in as many lands and as many languages as at present, but in every land and language under heaven.”

Fidelity to his Master is touchingly illustrated in a reply and counter-reply to the treasurer of the “ London Association in Aid of the Brethren’s Missions,” who wrote begging Montgomery to be present at a public meeting of the society in Birmingham.

“ I am sorry to say,” he replies, “ that I have not the heart to undertake the journey to Birmingham, . . . and must therefore earnestly entreat you to forgive me for declining this engagement.” He felt, however, that should the cause at all suffer through lack of his services, he should not forgive himself: accordingly next morning he revoked his hasty decision in a letter commencing thus : — “ My dear friend, — Read Matthew xxi. 28–31. This parable has pressed so hard upon me since I wrote my perverse note yesterday evening, in answer to yours proposing a missionary visit to Birmingham instead of Manchester, that, to deliver my conscience, I will endeavor to

go to the former place. . . . You see my weakness, not to call it by a harsher name : pray for me, that I may have more faith and patience to employ the little strength yet left me."

On Monday, February 1st, 1841, the friends of Rev. William Jay, of Bath, commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of his settlement as pastor of the Argyle-street Chapel, in that city. Christian men and women without distinction of sects came to testify their respect for the worth and usefulness of this venerable servant of God ; "a blessed evidence," said Montgomery, "of a Philadelphian spirit yet living and breathing in a Laodicean age."

The poet's presence was invoked ; it breathed out in his hymns, glowing with all the significant memorials of the delightful occasion, the singing of which formed one of the most interesting parts of the special service of the day. "I have read the proceedings," he writes to the chairman of the Jubilee Committee, in answer to the accounts sent him, "with great delight : for yet, amidst all the strife, envy, and uncharitableness *in* churches and *between* churches, so flagrant at this time, you have shown that there are occasions, and there may be found professors, when and of whom even an ungodly world can say, 'See how these Christians love one another !' Alas, how seldom is this exemplified !

"I thought much of you on the two days, especially on the Tuesday, when the meetings — the love-feasts, I ought to call them — were held, because with us the weather was tempestuous, and I feared that many of your friends might be disappointed. It appears, however, that whatever storms might rage without, there was peace within, and as many to enjoy it as the rooms would contain. I am greatly indebted to Mrs. Goodwin for the jubilee medallion,

the workmanship of which seems to me admirable; the likeness of your good pastor is excellent, and the simple register of dates on either side the most appropriate inscription in such a case. It was a beautiful and affecting sequel to the solemnities of the Sabbath, and the festivities of the breakfast on Tuesday, that the children and the youth were allowed to bring their offerings of gratitude and love to the father in the gospel of both old and young in your church and congregation. I have only to add my heart's desire and prayer to God for you all, that every one of the number of those who participated in the privileges of those two memorable days may be finally associated in that place where, a thousand and ten thousand ages hence, each may remember with adoring gratitude the blessedness of those meetings on earth, which many of you, no doubt, felt to be an earnest and foretaste of the glories and felicities of that house of God, eternal in the heavens,

“Where congregations ne’er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end.”

A few weeks later, March 22d, he writes to Mr. Bennett:

“Since I wrote last I have been much of the time at Ockbrook, whither I was summoned soon after to visit my long afflicted brother Ignatius, who appeared as near to the gates of death as life could be without the peril of instant dissolution. . . . Nothing can be more affecting nor more consoling than his humble looks and language: yet absent in the body, his spirit is already present with the Lord. . . . Mr. Roberts never, in my remembrance, looked better or heartier—brown and ruddy, and full of muscular and mental energy on the verge of fourscore years. You will probably have received proofs of his re-

doubtable intellect in a new tract of 112 pages, denouncing the Poor Law Commissioners and the whole system of pauper treatment in this most humane and enlightened Christian country. You and he, when you meet, may discuss the merits of this performance. It is a subject beyond my comprehension. I am not sorry to find that you are already in the field against the War-fiend, who is struggling in various quarters, a second time, to embroil all Christendom in the horrors and crimes of that 'game,' at which 'were their people wise, kings would not often play.' The Duke of Wellington well said, in reference to the miserable outbreak in Canada, 'England cannot have a little war.' No; if we fall out with America, we shall not long be at peace with France; and with the latter we cannot be long at war without all the powers of Europe being involved in the quarrel, some with, some against us. Then, in the 'Dance of Death,' 'change hands, cross over,' with each in turn for our partner, and all in turn our enemies, the only worse thing than being our allies, as it happened during the revolution. I heartily wish you success in your campaign, and that 'the dogs of War,' whether in America, France, the Levant, India, or China, may have nothing to gnaw but their chains, till such engines of wholesale destruction shall be perfected as Bonaparte himself, which, though he would not have scrupled to employ, he would not have dared to encounter. Then, 'Farewell, war, forever!'

On Easter Monday we find him as usual at the annual dinner of the Chimney Sweeps at Cutler's Hall, this being its thirty-fourth anniversary. In the evening he presided and spoke with his wonted fervor at a meeting of the London Missionary Society.

On the following day he was present at the opening of a

small school at Wincobank, where the boys and girls sang the hymn,

“A children’s temple here we raise,”

written for the occasion: thus “on benign commissions bent,”

“Like a patriarchal sage,
Holy, humble, cautious, mild,
He could blend the awe of age
With the sweetness of a child,”

and “prove himself the minister of all.”

On the 29th of April, his brother beloved, Ignatius, breathed his last, at the age of sixty-five, “having proved himself a good and faithful servant to various congregations of the United Brethren in England and Ireland.”

May-day Montgomery went to Ockbrook, where he was joined by his only surviving brother, Robert, from Woolwich.

Together they took their last look on the departed one, “and there were yet lingering” [on the face], James tells us, “traces of that placid resignation which had always marked it in life—the lingering twilight which followed the shining of that Sun of Righteousness amidst which the spirit of a good man has passed into a better world.”

He was buried near the chapel at Ockbrook, with the touching services of the Moravian church, the lark singing sweetly overhead, and the finches thrilling in the trees during the ceremony.

“Never were joy and grief more solemnly and happily mingled,” writes the bereaved brother to Mr. Bennett, “than on that occasion, when, after our simple burial-service, the members of our small congregation had a social meeting

(we call such "love-feasts") in the chapel, where a brief memorial of the departed was read, and an ode of collected verses, according to our practice, of various measures and tunes, was sung, treating of the blessedness of those who are forever with the Lord.

"My brother Robert is now with me at Sheffield, and next week accompanies me for a few days to Fulneck. In the beginning of June I am engaged to accompany our friend, the Rev. Peter Latrobe, on a missionary visit to Scotland, my native country, on which I have not set foot since the year 1776, when, as a child, I was transplanted to Ireland, and thence, in 1777, transferred to England, where I have become so rooted, and apparently so irradicable, that neither our late Rowland [Hodgson] nor yourself could, even for a short time, carry me off to the Continent, or across the Atlantic. But I believe I am where I ought to be, and have *no choice that I dare make*, except manifestly directed by that good Providence which, after I had once made a *bad* choice for myself, has not forsaken me. I feel myself 'faint, yet pursuing.'"

It was during this family affliction at Ockbrook, that he wrote the hymn, *Father! thy will, not mine be done.*

CHAPTER XVII.

VISIT TO SCOTLAND — RECEPTION AT GLASGOW — DR. WARDLAW'S SPEECH OF WELCOME — MONTGOMERY'S REPLY — HIS ACCOUNT OF THE MORAVIANS — PUBLIC BREAKFAST — RECEPTION AT HIS NATIVE PLACE — RECEPTION AT GREENWICH, STIRLING, DUNDEE, EDINBURGH, ETC. — DR. HUIE'S SPEECH — CONTRIBUTION FOR MORAVIAN MISSIONS — MONTGOMERY'S APPEARANCE IN COMPANY.

"I AM a Scotchman," said Montgomery, "because I was born in Scotland ; I ought to have been an Irishman, because both my parents were such ; and I pass for an Englishman, because I was caught young and imported hither before I was six years old, and have never since seen my native country except as a dim wreath of haze from the top of Helvellyn and Skiddaw."

The current of business never seems to have set towards Scotland ; and the multiplicity of his more positive engagements had hitherto left him little time to make pleasure and mere personal gratification the aim of a journey thither.

As he grew older, travelling towards his setting sun, its slanting beams, gilding the tree-tops of his early days, retinted the past and awoke an unspeakable yearning to revisit his native town and country.

A favorable opportunity at length offered, when Rev. Peter Latrobe invited the poet to accompany him to Scot-

land in behalf of the Moravian Missions, thus linking a noble object with the enjoyments of the journey.

They started from Sheffield on the 24th of September, 1841, and three days after we find them in a large assembly in the Trades' Hall of Glasgow, convened on behalf of the cause they came to advocate.

After the business of the morning was introduced, Dr. Wardlaw arose, from whose eloquent speech we catch the spirit of the day, and the right hearty hospitality of their Scottish welcome.

"I never arose," said the revered speaker, "with greater pleasure on any occasion than I now feel in introducing these dear Christian friends, who will best and most effectually introduce themselves, and will recommend both themselves and the cause of their visit to Glasgow. I now rise, however, with the more pleasure, because I take delight in looking these friends in the face, in seeing them amongst us, in hailing their presence, in giving them the right hand of fellowship, and in co-operating along with all who are now present in that good and blessed cause to which we are indebted for their presence. With regard to the friend on your right hand, I have not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance; but the name of Latrobe is associated with every hallowed recollection. I cannot forget the name of him who was the intimate friend of Wilberforce and other eminent Christian philanthropists of his day; and in connection with the African mission, many a time have I heard the name of Latrobe, under my father's domestic roof, from the lips of the late Dr. Balfour, whose name cannot be mentioned in this city without calling forth feelings of affection and veneration in every bosom which had the happiness to know him. And it is a very delightful thing when the work of God is thus handed down from

father to son, carried down from generation to generation, and race after race helps it towards its perfection. With regard to the other dear friend on your left hand, my acquaintance with him is of a far, far more remote date ; for it began in *The World before the Flood*. I had known a little of him before ; but it was there that I became first intimately acquainted with the character of his mind, and with the intellect, the genius, the imagination, the taste, the feeling, and the piety with which that mind is distinguished. I do delight, Mr. Chairman, and I trust that all here will respond to the expression of delight, in the contemplation of sanctified genius—of genius baptized into Christ, and invested with a halo of heavenly purity and love. There was a time, and that not far distant, when we were accustomed to use the designation of *the Christian Poet* ; and every one who heard that designation knew to whom it referred—the poet Cowper—and he eminently deserved the designation. But it is the delight of our hearts to know that the definite article is now superseded. We have more Christian poets than one ; and pre-eminent amongst them stands the friend on your left hand. I cannot imagine any responsibility more heavy than the possession of lofty powers of genius, unconnected with piety, and unconsecrated to the praise of that God by whom they were bestowed. Such powers have always appeared to me like lamps of pure oil gleaming in the midst of sepulchral darkness and corruption. There is a deep responsibility connected with the possession of such powers ; but we rejoice to know that these powers have been in an eminent manner, by our friend, devoted to the honor and consecrated to the service of God, and the advancement of human happiness in the highest degree. He has consecrated these powers to the service of God and the pro-

motion of all that is connected with the present and everlasting happiness of mankind. We rejoice therefore in having him amongst us; and we rejoice because we regard him as a Christian poet, and one belonging to our own land. When first I had the happiness of becoming acquainted with him personally, I found him, I may be allowed to say, in the most unpoetical place it was possible for a poet to occupy—in the very centre of the dark, dusky, smoky town of Sheffield; and it seemed to me as if he had chosen that particular place to illustrate the words, ‘*Ex fumo dare lucem!*’ He has now changed his residence—he is now on The Mount, the very place where a poet ought to be. He belongs to ourselves; Scotland claims him for her own; and it would ‘ill the bard beseech’ to be ashamed of Scotland; but whatever may be the feeling on his part, Irvine and Scotland will never be ashamed, but consider it an honor to have given him birth. But he is now amongst us in another capacity. As has been publicly announced to us, he is the son of missionary parents, and that is no small honor—of missionary parents too, who, after having submitted to terrible calamities, sleep, as the poet has told us, where the sun

“‘Shines without a shadow on their graves.’

I cannot help being struck with that line, not only from the fact it states, that his parents sleep under a vertical sun, but because associated with that fact is the pleasing thought that all is light over that hallowed spot far away,

“‘Where rest the ashes of the sainted dead.’”

Mr. Latrobe reciprocated this Christian salutation, after which Montgomery presented the claims of the brethren:

“In this place I ought to address you as brethren and sisters,” he said—and as his remarks unfold glimpses of Moravian history, we give them at large—“I am your countryman, and for the first time after a lapse of three-score years, I appear on my native soil. I feel it to be a high privilege to be permitted to meet you, and to make my public appearance as your countryman, in a place where, in one of the first sentences I heard from the reverend gentleman who offered up the opening prayer, the name of Jesus was mentioned. That is the name in which we meet; that is the name that is peculiarly preached as Jesus Christ and him crucified—as the only ground of the hope of salvation for perishing sinners. My friend and brother Latrobe alluded to one of the peculiar institutions of our Church, namely, the body of intercessors, whose duty it is to bear the congregation on their hearts in faithful prayer; but we do not thereby set aside the all-prevailing intercession which is continually made before the throne; we know only God the Father, and the only mediator we hold is the Lord Jesus Christ. [After explaining this peculiar institution a little more at large, Mr. Montgomery proceeded.] You have heard great, and wonderful, and glorious things spoken this day concerning the United Brethren. Their first denomination was derived from those followers of Huss who did not choose to defend their liberty and religion with the sword, but preferred rather to suffer than to fight. Their first denomination was, Brethren of the Society of Jesus; but there was a certain reason why it was necessary to change that to a simpler form, and they chose to be called the ‘United Brethren;’ united in Christ as the Head, having the everlasting strength to support them, and infinite wisdom to guide them. But who are the United Brethren? We are

not a national Church, we are not a provincial Church, we are not a denomination separated from any Church, and confined to any one locality. The United Brethren have been a poor and an afflicted people for four centuries past, but whose trust has been in the Lord; and they have been scattered here and there over the world. At the time of the persecution, which for two centuries threatened to extirpate the Church, they expatriated themselves. When the Church seemed consumed by the flames of persecution, becoming seven times hotter from century to century, and its members were scattered to all the winds of heaven from the mountains and forests of Bohemia, sparks fell from beyond the boundary of that country—sparks which the Lord's Spirit breathed upon, till they became a flame, which will not be extinguished so long as there shall exist hearts in which that flame is put, and whose duty it is to keep it continually burning. It was not an earthly flame that issued out of that burning persecution, but a light kindled at the altar before the throne of God, and which those who received the gospel in their hearts promised to go forth and preach in the simplicity of men who were determined to know nothing on earth but Jesus Christ and him crucified as the Saviour of sinners. That Church has some other peculiarities. It is the least of all the tribes of Israel; it is divided into widely separated sections; yet still it is the Church of the United Brethren at home and abroad, in the islands of the West Indies, in Greenland, in Labrador, in North America, and South Africa. Wherever it has carried the gospel, it has still been as a united Church—united in spirit, and that spirit under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. We are peculiar in another respect. The great work we are called to perform is far beyond the temporal means of support of

those engaged in it. It has pleased the Lord to make the Church of the Brethren dependent more or less on every other Christian Church with which we hold communion and fellowship in doctrine and worship. The annual expense of 12,000*l.* for supporting our missions is not raised amongst ourselves. We cannot, with the utmost exertion, produce more than one fourth, or, at the most, one third of the amount ; but the Lord has made his people willing, on every hand, out of their abundance to communicate to our necessities. The Lord Jesus himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' The greater blessing belongs to those of our friends on whom he has conferred the privilege of giving ; and we must hope to enjoy the smaller by receiving of their bounty. What the Lord Jesus Christ has given to you, and what you, as his stewards, have bestowed upon us, must be accounted for by us both to Him and to you ; and when the details of that expenditure come before you, it will be apparent that there has been no want of economy in all our arrangements. My friend has intimated how self-denying the Brethren are. Our missionaries labor without hire, except a very small provision for the education of their children, and a small retiring allowance. But do they labor without wages ? No ; they ask and they receive the greatest reward which they can enjoy under heaven ; they are not content with a less price for their labors and privations among the heathen than that which will satisfy the Redeemer, when He shall see of the travail of his soul. They require souls for their hire ; and souls in the last day shall rise up and come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with them and with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of their father." Mr. Montgomery proceeded briefly to sketch the history

of the Moravian Church, the origin of which he dated about the ninth century, when missionaries came into Moravia, Bulgaria, and Bohemia, with the Scriptures in their hands, and translated them into the languages of these provinces. "It was a remarkable fact," he observed, "that a princess of Bohemia was married to Richard the Second; and when she came to the Court of Britain she found herself among those who professed the same Christian doctrines as herself; and she became the patroness of Wickliffe and the Reformers in England, as she had patronized those in her own country who maintained the truth in opposition to the House of Austria. They held the Scriptures in such respect, that previous to the Reformation three editions of the Bohemian Scriptures were printed by these people, and used throughout that province. The last effort of persecution threw them with their families into Alsatia, where they founded a flourishing Church; and thus they became a missionary Church, as soon as they were called to bear the cross as a Church of martyrs." He could not, after three days of fatiguing travelling, which was more than could well be borne by a bruised reed which was not yet broken, and smoking flax which was not yet quenched, enter at large into the statement to which Mr. Latrobe had invited him. He proceeded to refer to a few of the features of the West Indian missions. Adverting to the Danish island of Santa Cruz, he stated, that it had been proposed to him to suggest to the leading men in the Church the propriety of superseding the mixed French, German, Dutch, and English, which form the language of the islands, with the English alone, which it was proposed should be taught in the mission schools. "This," he remarked, "was a proposal not to be hastily taken up, nor to be hastily laid down; for he was persuaded that the time

might come, and he trusted that the time would come, when all the nations should have one language, and that language the English. The island of Santa Cruz was without a parallel in the history of missions, and without an example in the history of the world. It was purchased by a Danish councillor from the French who had deserted it, and left it to lie waste for forty years. They had heard to-day that it now embraces a population of 25,000. It occurred to this councillor to call in the aid of the United Brethren, with whose self-denial and patient endurance he was already acquainted ; and he prevailed upon fourteen of them to settle amongst the negroes whom he placed upon the island. During forty years it had lain fallow, producing rank luxuriant vegetation and poisonous underwood. In the first year, ten of the Brethren, — so it was ordered in the Divine government, — laid their bones in the soil of that inhospitable island ; but others were ready to take their places, and the work of God, under all possible difficulties, continued to flourish. He did not attribute all the prosperity which had attended the colony to the missionaries ; it was not altogether the effect of their labors, but it was intimately connected with them. It was objected by many who misunderstood the character of missionary labor, that they went among the heathen to Christianize them before they civilized them. “ Our brethren,” he continued, “ go with the gospel in their hands, and the power of the gospel in their hearts. Their system is aggressive. They do not begin with the young, or with the middle-aged, or with those who are verging towards the close of life ; they preach to old and young the simple testimony which converted the first Greenlander, and which in every place where the Brethren have carried the gospel, has been the means of conversion ; they simply, faithfully,

and fervently preach Christ crucified, which proves itself to be the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation."

A few days after, a public breakfast was given at the Black Bull Inn, in honor of the venerable poet, where a hundred gentlemen assembled to mingle in the social enjoyments of the occasion.

Their guest, verging to three-score years and ten, and meeting the company in the three-fold character of countrymen, friends, and Christians, seemed thrilled with tender and serious emotions.

Briefly rehearsing the leading incidents of his life since leaving Scotland at four years and a half old, and expressing his strong attachment to Britain, as bound to her by a three-fold cord, having had a home in each of her three principalities, he declared he could in no way better express his feelings than in the language of a poem written twenty-five years before, "I love thee, O my native isle," which he read with the earnest and simple utterance which marks true feeling.

On his arrival at Irvine, his native town, the Provost, magistrates, and council met him at the station, and having conducted him to the hall, made him a burghess of that ancient and royal burgh. The heart of all Irvine seemed moved on the occasion, and old and young, rich and poor, "lads running barefoot and lasses glowing with pleasure," came forth to welcome the poet to his birth-place.

Dressed in a plain suit of black, his ample shirt-ruffles and locks of snowy whiteness bespeak an age gone by, while the unwrinkled cheek and clear-speaking countenance disclose a fresh and unworn spirit within. With no ordinary interest did he seek his cottage home, gaze upon the landscapes that smiled upon his childhood, and receive the

honest grip of an old Scottish grand-dame, who dandled him upon her knee in infancy and smoothed the pillow of his dying sister, and whose rehearsal of his nursery days filled him with a strange and sad delight.

Services were held to promote the special object of the visit, and a public breakfast was given in honor of their revered guest.

During the visit, he was told that the archives of the town contained a manuscript copy of one of Burns's poems, and that a similar memorial of his genius would be highly prized.

On his return, finding among his papers the original copy of *The World before the Flood*, written in 1813, he sent it to the authorities of his native town, accompanied by a handsome edition of his poems, just issued at London.

The deputation visited Paisley, Greenock, Stirling, Perth, Dundee, and many places of historic interest, when we enter Edinburgh with them, where they were received with the same lively interest which marked their reception elsewhere. Gentlemen of all parties came forward to welcome Montgomery, and do honor to his genius.

"It is refreshing," said Dr. Huie, at a public breakfast, "to see amongst us that venerable bard, on whose writings we have so often dwelt with admiration and delight; whether we wandered with him over the mountain solitudes of Switzerland, or visited with him the tornado-rocked dwellings of the West Indies, the ice-bound coasts of Greenland, or the enchanting scenery of the Pelican Island; or whether, surrendering our imaginations more completely to his guidance, we permitted him to carry us back through the vista of departed ages to the World before the Flood. It is no small praise, sir, to say of an uninspired writer, that the pleasure which we derive from

his works is pure and unmingled ; and yet such is the ease with the poems of our friend, Mr. Montgomery. Brightly though the cup of his fancy sparkles, there is no poison in the chalice ; sweet though the flowers be which he scatters around us, there is no serpent underneath to sting the hand that gathers them. But high though this praise is, our honored guest deserves a higher still. He has tuned his lyre to the loftiest theme which can engage the mind or the imagination of man ; he has sung in hallowed strains the triumphs of incarnate Deity ; and he has supplied us with befitting language in which to express our devotional feelings, in almost every conceivable variety of circumstances. I believe, sir, that there is no one here who has not felt and acknowledged this — whether in teaching the lisping babe upon his knee that

“ ‘ Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try ; ’

or whether, looking forward, in an hour of grief and desolation, to the last resting-place of the mourner, he has rejoiced to think that

“ ‘ There is a calm for those that weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found ;
They softly lie and sweetly sleep
Low in the ground ; ’

or whether, rising on imagination’s wing, he has soared to the third heaven, and, overpowered by the flood of glory which has there burst upon him, has exclaimed, in tones of rapture —

“ ‘ What are these in bright array ?
This innumerable throng ?
Round the altar, night and day,
Tuning their triumphal song ? ’

It is not only as a poet, then, but as a Christian poet — and not as a Christian poet merely, but as the first Christian poet of the day — the Cowper, as he has been well termed, of the nineteenth century—that, in the name of this meeting and of my fellow-citizens, I bid Mr. Montgomery welcome, thrice welcome, to Edinburgh; and express a hope, that although this be his first, it will not be his last visit to the metropolis of his native land. But, Sir, I must not forget that we are met here for a higher and a holier purpose than to render honor to man for what the grace and the Spirit of God have enabled him to do.”

The highest respect which could be rendered to the poet was service done to the cause which brought him to Scotland, and whose advocacy he ever made prominent over all things else. The charms of those literary circles which adorn her metropolis, the almost classic records of her soil, and the distinguished courtesies everywhere proffered him, could never divert his mind from the direct object of his journey as “a messenger from the United Brethren.” Personal distinctions, not undervalued or lightly esteemed, met the child of the Christian missionary, and the poet and advocate of Christian missions, to do him honor, but they were offerings which he devoutly laid upon the altar of the Redeemer of the world.

After a month’s sojourn, the deputation left the genuine hospitalities of their Scottish Christian friends with six hundred pounds for the missionary treasury, and a gain of prayerful interest to the cause which no money could measure.

Dr. Huie, whose hospitable mansion in George-square was the poet’s home while at Edinburgh, tells us, with a fire-side unreserve, of his visit there:

“His frank, yet gentle and unassuming manners, made

him a great favorite with my young people, who showed their regard for him in every possible way, leaving in his apartment so many little tokens of friendship, that he one day said to me in their presence : ‘ Dr. Huie, I think there must be fairies in your house, for I find so many fairy gifts in my room, that I cannot conceive where they come from, unless they bring them.’ But his warm and benevolent heart appeared especially attracted toward my youngest son David, then just eight years of age. Him he always addressed in kind and paternal accents, and spoke of him in his absence, and mentioned him in the precious letters which I received from him after his return to Sheffield, in a strain of marked affection. He copied for him on a card his own poetical version of the Lord’s Prayer, adding :—

“ ‘ Thus, as the Saviour taught to say,
May little David learn to pray ! ’

“ One day, too, when David showed him a copy of Milton, which he had received as a prize at school, he took it into his hand and said, with much feeling, ‘ Ah ! David, what would I have given at your age for such a book as that ! ’

“ The Sunday after his arrival, he enjoyed the privilege of hearing two of our most eminent preachers, and afterwards spent the evening in interesting and edifying conversation with my family, while I went to assist in taking up the collection in aid of the Moravian Missions, which was made after a sermon preached by Mr. Latrobe, in the largest of our city churches. On every day during the following week, except Thursday, I invited various friends to meet him at breakfast, distinguished either for their celebrity in literature or science, or their attachment to the cause of the Moravian Missions. In this way, or by

calling with me at their own houses, he made the acquaintance of Professor Wilson ; of his brother, Mr. James Wilson, the eminent naturalist ; of Mr. Moir, of Musselburgh, better known as the 'Delta' of Blackwood's Magazine ; of Mr. Steell, the sculptor ; of Dr. Abercrombie, Dr. Greville, and many of our city ministers of different denominations. I soon found, however, that Mr. Montgomery did not shine in a large company ; his sensitive nature shrinking from any thing like display. His conversation, therefore, was usually confined to the friends who sat on either side of him ; and if I addressed a remark to him from the foot of the table, he would briefly signify his assent to it ; or if it were calculated to draw forth some observation from him, as was sometimes intentionally the case, he would express his opinion in as few words as possible, and with much diffidence. But in the domestic circle, where none except myself and family were present, he gave utterance to his thoughts and feelings without the least reserve, and his conversation was of a rich and instructive character. Always cheerful himself, he diffused an atmosphere of cheerfulness around him ; but never did he forget the Apostle's injunction, ' Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.' His remarks on men and things, and more especially on the literature and literary men of the day, were those of a man of candor and refinement, a Christian and a gentleman ; and I was delighted to find, as the result of nine days of unrestrained and constant interchange of thought and sentiment with him, that his published works were as truly the transcript of the feelings and conceptions of the inner man, as the hills and groves, mirrored in the glassy lake, are the reflections of the landscape which surrounds it.

" On the 25th of October my venerable friend returned

home, and we continued to correspond at intervals for some years. But as the infirmities of age advanced upon him, he ceased to write ; although he never missed an opportunity of sending me a kind message, in token of his affectionate remembrance."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH OF MR. BENNETT — ROBBERY AT THE MOUNT — VISIT TO IRELAND
— DEATH OF SOUTHEY — NEW POET-LAUREATE — VISIT TO BUXTON —
LECTURING AT LIVERPOOL — LETTER TO DR. RAFFLES — PREMONITION
OF OLD AGE — INNOVATIONS — WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT'S VISIT —
LONGFELLOW — POEM TO "LILY" — CORN-LAWS — LETTER TO HOLLAND
— HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

ON his return home, Montgomery wrote Mr. Bennett on his birth-day, Nov. 4th, 1841 :

"To-day I am three-score years and ten ; how I have spent them, He only who gave, and will soon call to account, can know. The newspapers have informed you of our month in Scotland, and of the Christian kindness shown to my excellent companion and myself as messengers of our poor little church. I need to watch and pray that I might escape harm, even from all the good which a gracious Providence permitted to befall me, for we are tried by blessings as well as adversities."

A week scarcely elapsed, before tidings of the sudden death of this highly valued and truly beloved friend reached The Mount. It was a heavy stroke to Montgomery.

"Ah," he wrote, in the closing lines of a little poem, after rallying from the shock,

— "When some long comfort ends,
And Nature would despair,
Faith to the heaven of heavens ascends,
And meets ten thousand there ;

First faint and small, then clear and bright,
They gladden all the gloom,
As stars that seem but points of light
The rank of suns assume."

Mr. Bennett died in a fit, on the road between London and Hackney, in the 68th year of his age. A monument was erected to his memory in the cemetery of Sheffield, with appropriate inscriptions, by his bereaved friend.

An occurrence of lesser note, rudely jarred upon the tranquillity of The Mount; the robbery of the house one Sabbath evening, during the absence of its master and Miss Gales at a religious service. Among the plunder, which mainly consisted of money and plate, the robbers helped themselves to the massive inkstand, presented to the poet some years before by the ladies of Sheffield: indeed, most of the loss was such as money could not replace; but the most painful circumstance of all was a strong probability that "perfidy, rather than violence did the deed," the servant girl having herself introduced the thieves, and then suffered herself to be tied up in the cellar, to elude suspicion and excite the compassion of her employers.

The matter was never prosecuted, nor were any of the stolen articles ever recovered; the touching story of the inkstand having been returned by the penitent thief, we are sorry to find, is not "founded on fact."

In the latter part of 1842, Montgomery was solicited to undertake, with Mr. Latrobe, a tour in Ireland, similar to that made in Scotland. The feeble state of his health made him hesitate to start on a journey involving so much labor. In view however of the urgency of the case, he rallied his strength, and left Sheffield early in December.

Ireland was not remiss in her reception of the Christian poet.

Greetings like those in Scotland met him at the capital. But waiving all personal considerations, and anxious to bestow his failing strength upon the cause which he came to present, "I come," he said, 'to those who would do him homage,' "only in one character, and that an exceedingly simple one, as a member of the Church of the United Brethren, and in that character as a brother to every Christian throughout the land. I come before you as a little child, pleading for help to carry forward our missionary work, and to bear that blessed burden which it has pleased God to lay upon us."

And in this character, the deputation were received and aided with a love and liberality which did honor to the Irish heart.

On the 21st of March, 1843, the bard of Keswick breathed his last:—a palace in ruins he had long been. The over-tasked student sat at last a stranger in his own work-shop, his mind gone, or only faintly flickering over the well-read treasures of his ample library.

At the time of his death, he was the poet-laureate, and who would succeed to the vacated honor, was a question speedily asked by the inquisitive and suggestive press.

"Wordsworth, Campbell, Moore, and our own Montgomery, appear to be the only names which we can mention in this connection," answers a Sheffield paper. "Upon the last of these, as pre-eminently the 'Christian Poet' of his country, the honor of successorship to his late respected friend would descend with a grace and propriety which, we doubt not, would be highly approved by the good and the wise of all parties."

"I perceive you would make me poet-laureate if you

were king," said the poet, on meeting the editor the next morning; "I think I could guess who will be, but his name is not on your list."

Milman was the person alluded to, though Montgomery thought him less qualified for the discharge of its duties than likely to get it.

A conversation following upon the manner in which the office had been filled in modern times, "some people thought," said Montgomery, "that Southey was too much under the influence of his 'Thalabas,' 'Kehamas,' and 'Madoes,' to be a popular English poet-laureate—but he deserves credit for having rescued the office from that degradation into which it had sunk during the incumbency of his immediate predecessors, by the execution of those biennial compositions, which were formerly set to music by the king's composers."

On being asked what he thought should be expected from a laureate of requisite note and abilities:—"A series of grand national odes on grand national subjects," he replied, "of which we do not possess a single popular specimen from the pen of a poet-laureate. They should combine, with a strong historical interest, all the charms of the old ballad poetry."

Wordsworth was the favored individual; and in a letter of reply to Montgomery's congratulations, a few months afterwards, he says:

"I am truly sensible of the kindness of your expressions upon my appointment to the laureateship, which I at first refused on account of my advanced age. But it was afterwards pressed upon me so strongly by the Lord Chancellor, and by Sir Robert Peel himself, that I could not possibly persist in that refusal; and especially as her Majesty's name and approval were again referred to; and I was as-

sured that it was offered me solely in consideration of what I had already done in literature, and without the least view to future exertions, as connected with the honor. It has since gratified me to learn from many quarters, as you yourself also tell me, that the appointment has given universal satisfaction. And I need scarcely add, that it has afforded me a *melancholy* pleasure to be thought worthy of succeeding my revered friend."

Friend after friend departing, was not the only token of a long life waning. The infirmities of age began to creep upon him. His over-coat slid on less easily; and his fingers grew stiff, making writing difficult and painful.

"There is as much music as ever in the instrument," he said cheerily, "but the hand has not power over the bow, and cannot call the spirit out."

In the autumn he went to Buxton to try the effect of bathing for numbness in his right hand, which, he feared was about "to lose its cunning."

Playfully he reports himself to his companion at home, Sarah Gales:

"Buxton, Sept. 1, 1843.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"For once at least I am determined to send you a downright dull matter-of-fact letter, having no spirit even to write nonsense, — unless I cannot help it. After parting with you for the five-hundredth time (if my reckoning be right), since we first met, I reached the Tontine in safety, and got into the Buxton coach. The morning was dismal without, and not very bright within that part of me where I live, — that is where I think and feel; for the rest of my clay tenement is to me but as the unoccupied rooms in our old house in the Hartshead, only visited occasionally when

special necessity requires. This is a 'matter of fact,' though a mystery, and therefore not quite irrelevant to the theme of this letter. I arrived here on Tuesday: my coach companions were two of 'the better sex,' both mothers, and one, to my inexpressible dismay, had a baby in her arms. I have often said that, when 'I am King,'—that is, when I am 'King, Lords, and Commons, and all' (for less authority could not do it, even if *that* could), I will make a law to prohibit, under severe penalties, any woman, old or young, so incumbered, from taking an inside place in a coach, to the annoyance of bachelors like me. In justice, however, to this baby, I must say it was the best fellow-traveller of the size that it was my fate ever to be thus pinfolded with, in all my adventures: it never cried, nor kicked, nor committed any of those nameless little offences which are the besetting infirmities of such little innocents. The worst thing, therefore, that I wish may ever befall it is, that, as it was the best baby that ever was born—every mother having had *that* baby—it may grow up to be the best man or woman—and so I have done with it, and turn to less important, or, in lady's phrase, less *interesting* matters. [Then follow particulars about lodging, living, bathing, &c.] I have taken three *hot* baths here, but not ventured to plunge into the naturally tepid ones, which are the miracle-working waters of Buxton. Every day I have got abroad, and exercise myself from head to foot with climbing the hills, walking through the plantations, or rambling down the dales . . . If I should make a digression to Ockbrook, instead of presenting myself at The Mount, I shall write a line to inform you; meanwhile, my dear Sarah, do not be uneasy about me: be assured that I shall take as good care of myself, as though I were ten times more precious than I am, or than

I deserve to be ; and yet I am, with my heart's best affections, and most earnest prayers for your present, future, and everlasting welfare, your faithful and most grateful friend, for kindnesses which I appreciate, but can never repay."

In spite of infirmities, the next year we find him at Liverpool, lecturing upon the poets, but he was compelled to decline all visiting, feeling his need of the restoring power of rest after the exertion of his public efforts. He thus writes Dr. Raffles of that city after his return :

" Sheffield, September 10, 1841.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" Pray permit me still to call you so, though during my late sojourn in Liverpool, by the help of bad management, I failed, time after time, in my purposes to make you a personal visit, and spend an hour with you, on living over again the days and weeks of former years, when, as your guest, I had the privilege to enjoy, in company with our late friend George Bennett, some of the pleasantest, and not the least profitable hours of Christian society that I ever remember. Twice I adventured through the sea of Liverpool — for to me the town with its high ways and bye-ways was as pathless and bewildering as the great deep itself — towards your chapel ; and by inquiring at every corner or open door, I reached the spot in safety. On the first occasion you were absent, but your pulpit was well occupied by good Dr. Urwick of Dublin (as I understood) ; and an excellent discourse he delivered. I was both awed and affected by the *largeness* of the place, and the *multitude* of the congregation ; but yet more deeply touched on the following Sabbath evening to find that the congrega-

tion was no more diminished than the place, when you, as the ordinary preacher, were on duty. I confess that, though the thought was overpowering, I rejoiced to find that such a burthen of the Lord had been laid upon you, and that He had given, and continued to give to you, bodily strength and mental resources, but above all, His heavenly grace, and His Holy Spirit, to bear up under such 'a weight of glory' as that 'burthen' must be, — standing between Him and so many souls, as the one who must give account. This, I do trust, you will be enabled to render, when the thousands to whom you have ministered shall rise up to call you blessed, and be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . I close this letter with assuring you that, with sincere gratitude for many kindnesses at your hands in years gone by, and with confirmed esteem and respect, I am your obliged friend,

“J. MONTGOMERY.”

“Ah,” he sadly said one day to Mr. Holland, “nothing can prevent us from growing old.”

But if at times he sighed over the premonitions of decay, which bade him husband his strength for accustomed duties, and withheld him from the new and numerous calls of the new era dawning upon him, he did not look with distrust upon improvements, or discern more evil than good in these later days.

Innovations were never scare-crows to his wide and discerning mind.

Speaking of Wordsworth's sonnet deprecating the projected Kendal and Windemere Railway:—“Poetically, the lines are not unworthy of their author,” he said; “but practically, I think he is wrong. I should have no more

objection to it, than to the small steamer, 'Lady of the Lake,' which now actually plies on Windemere itself."

"Punch," remarked his friend, "represents the laureate as exclaiming, at the unwelcome sight of such an object in such a place:

"What incubus, my goodness! have we here,
Cumbering the bosom of our lovely lake?
A steam-boat, as I live! — without mistake!
Puffing and splashing over Windemere!
What inharmonious shouts assail mine ear?
Shocking poor Echo, that perforce replies, —
'Ease her!' and 'stop her!' — frightful horrid cries,
Mingling with frequent pop of ginger beer."

He laughed, and enjoyed the quotation, saying, "I must confess I always watch the progress of a steamer or of a railway train with pleasure, even amidst the finest of our home scenery at least; and I was particularly pleased the other day, with observing the transit of an engine and train of carriages along the bank side of the River Don, and through the graceful skirts of Wharneliffe Wood."

"In truth I am relinquishing," he writes to a friend, "all my former active exertions in public affairs, holding my tongue in meetings, and refraining from engagements in private company, lest I should be drawn out in excitement or sink into apathy."

A hard, if wholesome economy, we think, still leaping with the warm pulses of a heart unworn, that rallies

—— "the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
Its present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season."

It was on a bright June morning of 1844, that our own poet, Bryant, paid a visit to The Mount to see one, "whose name," he said, "he had long honored, and of the admiration of whom he had given evidence by committing to memory when young the whole of *The Wanderer of Switzerland*."

The quiet and unaffected manners of his American guest charmed Montgomery, and he felt at home with him immediately.

"I am anxious," said he, in the course of conversation, "to see your poets give to their works an impression of native originality, more of an interest derived from the peculiar character of their country, and imitate less those of our own — on this account I have been much pleased with Longfellow."

Of Bryant himself this is a marked excellence, whose descriptive writings are essentially American, and the graphic felicity of whose details transport us to all the brilliant peculiarities of our forest scenery.

On Montgomery playfully remarking, "You pirate our books so in your country, sometimes reprinting a whole volume in a newspaper," Bryant rejoined: "And you certainly return the compliment; I say nothing of Longfellow's poems, which you have named; but my own have all been reprinted here, without either consultation or concurrence on my part; and I was surprised, when in London the other day, to have put into my hand a metropolitan impression of a few pieces which I published only just before I left home to complete a volume. The English printer seems to have thought them equally desirable to perfect his surreptitious edition."

Longfellow seems to have been a favorite with the Sheffield poet.

"The Village Blacksmith" delighted him. "It is real poetry," he exclaimed on reading the little poem; "the inspiration of a happy moment; and not mere rhymes *got up* on a selected subject, to show the author's skill: they will form a beautiful pendant to Shakspeare's graphic and well-known description of a smith. How happily has the poet described the burning toil of the worthy man; and even my own wandering curiosity, when, as a Fulneck school-boy, I used to peep into old John Oddy's smithy at Tonge:

"Week in — week out — from morn till night
 You can hear his bellows blow;
 You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
 With measured beat, and slow . . .
 And children coming home from school,
 Look in at the open door;
 They love to see the flaming forge,
 And hear the bellows roar,
 And catch the burning sparks that fly
 Like chaff from a threshing floor."

And then the moral built upon the blacksmith's "something attempted — something done:"

"Thus at the flaming forge of life,
 Our fortunes must be wrought;
 Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
 Each burning deed and thought!"

But, ah, the flames of *his* forge were burning dimmer and dimmer:

"I have," said Montgomery, "posted to-day, for a gentleman at Bath, a little poem, which I have had in hand ever since January, on the *Grasshopper*; a subject proposed by

himself, and intended, I believe, to illustrate some statement or other in a book on grasses. You will hardly believe me when I tell you, that I made nine or ten transcripts of the piece before I could fully satisfy myself with it. Such a trifle would not, at one period, have cost me so much labor; but now, literally as well as metaphorically, even 'the grasshopper is a burden' to me."

Lily, a little pet of five years, the grandchild of his friend Samuel Roberts, having suddenly died, the poet thus expresses his sympathy:

"Deeply and affectionately sympathizing with you and each respectively of your family, sufferers by the late bereavement, I can only add, that, though the delight of your eyes has been taken away with a stroke, the desire of your hearts, — their treasure, for so brief a time in possession, — is, I verily believe, where all your treasures ought to be — in heaven, and whither to the end may every one among your number seek it individually, and find it for ever; since *there* it cannot be lost, and there its true value can alone be known, as the purchase of the precious blood of Jesus Christ — the richest ransom which eternal love itself could pay."

The following lines were enclosed:

"In Memory of E. C. R. (Lily), who died aged five years.

"She was a spirit, sent
On earth a little while;
She came among us, peeped, and went
Away like her own smile;
That smile, which oft, with childhood's grace,
Showed us heaven's image in her face,
The mirror of a soul, from whence
Sin had not banished innocence.

“She was a jewel rare,
Precious beyond all price ;
Not lost, as worldly treasures are,
But lodged in Paradise ;
Where, at the rising of the just,
We pray, we hope, we humbly trust
To see her shine, a glorious gem
In the Redeemer's diadem.

“She was a love-knot, tied
By Heavenly Love's own hand,
To hold, what death could not divide,
In one united hand,
The cords of many a gentle heart,
Which parting only seem'd to part,
For Lily cannot cease to be
Our love-knot in eternity.

“J. M.

“The Mount, June, 1845.”

Towards the end of December, great public anxiety was manifested in consequence of the sudden breaking up of Sir Robert Peel's government ; and the attempt, ultimately unsuccessful on the part of Lord John Russell, to form an administration on the basis of a coalition of parties favorable to an immediate abolition of the Corn Laws. This crisis of the Cabinet was rendered still more interesting by the unexpected demise of Lord Wharncliffe, at this time President of the Privy Council. In these occurrences Montgomery seemingly evinced a more lively concern than he had latterly been wont to take in political movements.

“I have been thinking,” he said, “about the Corn Laws : I am, perhaps, not a competent, though I am certainly a disinterested judge in the question, and I must confess I

can neither perceive in what way they must needs be so mischievous as they are said to be, nor how their abolition will certainly lead to all those great national benefits that some persons appear to anticipate ; but stronger heads and sterner wills than mine will determine the issue. I only wish the conflict was well over." He had, a few days previously, rated Mr. Holland for not going to hear Mr. Cobden speak at the Cutler's Hall. "I should have gone to hear myself," said the poet, "if I could have been invisible, or allowed to make one of the crowd ; but I did not like to encounter the risk of being invited to take a seat on the platform."

In the autumn of 1846, with Miss Gales, he projected a jaunt to Harrogate.

"I am glad you are going," said a friend ; "these autumn days are so fine."

"Aye," answered the poet, in a tone of sadness, "they may be so to young men, who *talk* of those pensive sensations which old men *feel*."

"It was a kind of triumph once," is his monody, —

—— "to see
 " All nature die, and find myself at ease,
 In youth, that seemed an immortality :
 But I am changed now, and feel with trees
 A brotherhood, and in their obsequies
 Think of my own."

From Harrogate, Sept. 18th, 1846, he writes to his friend, John Holland, as follows :

"I ought to have written to you sooner, though there being no high pressure upon my conscience, I have as usual deferred the obligation to the last hour. . . . Miss Gales and I arrived here safely on Tuesday evening. Mr.

Blackwell met us on our alighting at the entrance of this multifarious collection of all manner of human dwellings, where there are fewer homes than houses; the latter, in bulk and accommodations, being built and furnished for pilgrims and sojourners rather than for the resident inhabitants. Yet at this season so overflowing is the tide of population, that on our arrival, had not our friend Mr. B. been warned of our coming, we might, indeed, have found room enough on High Harrogate Common to spread our garments on the green sward, and rested on our mother's lap, and under the infinity of space, where all the host of heaven sleep by day and watch by night; for no narrower bed or lower roof might have been accessible to afford us shelter.

“Our journey was pleasant and easy; and though I, of course, had forecast in my melancholy and ever-misgiving mind all manner of petty incidents and vexations to cross us by the way, — laying out of the question the *possible possibilities* of explosions, crashes, dangers, and deaths, that imperil travellers by railway, we might, undisturbed, have slept and dreamt most marvellously of these horrors, without one hair-breadth 'scape, between The Mount and *Cornwall House*, where we are now quartered, and which ought to be called ‘The Mount’ of Harrogate, being on the highest point yet built upon, and overlooking all below, at a safe distance from the smoke, the smells, the bustle, and ‘all the goings on’ (Coleridge's phrase) of human life in this strange place. Strange, surely, it is, where more is seen, and heard, and done, and thought, and said, and suffered, and all the rest of sublunary things — more of these occur and pass in the three months of which a Harrogate year consists than in the remaining nine in *common places* where everything is *common-place* from the first of January

to the last of December. . . . We are very comfortably lodged under the same roof with Mr. Blackwell's family, having our separate establishments, but being very good neighbors. Miss Gales, with her kind regards, says, you shall be very welcome if you will visit us here, and we will make as much of you as we can. Don't forget to call at The Mount ; and any letters worth sending, forward as soon as you can. I have neither room nor time to say *Farewell*, as witness the word itself."

"You mention honey," he replies to a female friend, respecting a promised gift, "and very considerately offer to send me some if I like it, and on a certain condition. I do like it, and consent to the condition, if not to be bound by the letter, yet to keep it according to the spirit. 'What is sweeter than honey?' was one of the points of Samson's riddle. One of the Apocryphal writers (Eccles. xi. 3) says, beautifully, 'The bee is little among such as fly; but her fruit is the chief of sweet things.' On higher and holier authority, however, I find that there is indeed something on earth, even sweeter than 'the fruit' of the bee, and no wonder, for it came down from heaven, and is yet more delicious than that 'angels' food,' the manna that was sent to the children of Israel in the wilderness. The inspired Psalmist says, Ps. xix. — see verses 9, 10, and Ps. cxix. v. 103; and *you* know that these things are so, for you 'have tasted the good word of God;' and may you ever live thereby! For this, may I too hunger and thirst, that my soul may live by it through both worlds; for it is the seed of eternal life when sown and quickened in a prepared heart. I have only to add, in answer to your kind enquiries, that new maladies, almost necessarily incurable in old bodies, multiply upon me with years; and I must be thankful for comparative exemption from very painful ones.

An internal symptom of morbid disease, without anything to be called suffering, is my latest warning of a decaying tabernacle."

The friends returned from their visit to Harrogate, improved in health and spirits.

The first business we find him attending to is the disposal of a hundred pounds, given him by Mr. Roberts for the Moravian Brethren, fifty of which he bestowed upon their missions, and fifty for their ministers' fund. This gentleman had already made him his almoner to the amount of six or seven hundred pounds for similar purposes at various times — tributes of personal friendship, as well as proofs of Christian liberality.

A few days afterwards, a stranger called upon the poet, who playfully presented the following epistle of introduction from his friend :

" To the Poet James Montgomery.

" Poets there are, whom I am well content
 Only to see in mirror of their verse,
 Feeling their very presence might disperse
 The glorious vision which their lines present ;
 But never could my shaping wit invent
 An image worthy of a Christian bard
 Such as thou art — but ever would discard
 Conceit too earthy and irreverent
 To be thy likeness. Therefore I regret
 The fate, or fault, or whatsoe'er it be,
 Hath made thy holy lineament as yet
 A vague imagination unto me.
 I more should love and better understand
 Thy verse, could I but hold thee by the hand.

" HARTLEY COLERIDGE."

CHAPTER XIX.

WILBERFORCE — HOWITT'S "HOMES AND HAUNTS OF THE POETS" —
VISIT TO WATH — REMINISCENCES OF YOUTH — ROSCOE CLUB — DEATH
OF FRIENDS.

THE clergy of Sheffield having had a private meeting to consider whether anything should be done to counteract the spread of popery, concluded not to make a public demonstration, but to hinder the growth of error by a more diligent sowing of the truth.

"They are right," said Montgomery; "they seem to have acted on the plan of the old penknife cutler, who determined that he would go to bed for a day, in order to devise new patterns; but his faculty of invention proving wholly unproductive, he got up, resolved to do nothing; saying, he thought the old patterns were, after all, the best!"

"Have you read the Rev. Henry Wilberforce's discourse on Christian unity?" asked a friend.

"I have: the Protestant clergyman is as infallible, in his own opinion, as the Pope himself, and far less reasonable: he assumes, indeed, without one tittle of evidence, or even of argument, that *his* church is THE CHURCH; and then, with as much dogmatical gravity as the Roman pontiff could arrogate, he declares that beyond the pale of his communion there is no salvation: with equal bigotry does the vicar of East Farleigh pronounce, not only that 'all

dissent is sin,' but he tells us, 'how very shocking it is, that many good sort of people think nothing of coming to church on the Sunday morning, and then going to meeting in the evening.' "

The preacher's excellent father often went to Mr. Jay's chapel, at Bath, as well as to other dissenting places of worship; and it is lamentable to find his sons not only shirking facts of this kind, but actually repudiating, by their own extravagant sentiments of conduct, the evangelical catholicity of their revered father's character.

This year, also, appeared Howitt's "Homes and Haunts of the English Poets," which Montgomery read with much interest.

"He is quite alive to coincidences," remarked the poet, "as in such a work he ought to be. I was amused with his statement to the effect that the house in which Moore was born is now a whisky shop; that Burns's native cottage is a public house; Shelley's house at Great Marlow, a beer-shop; the spot where Scott was born occupied with a building used for a similar purpose; and even Coleridge's residence at Nether-Stowey, the very house in which the poet composed that sweet 'Ode to the Nightingale,' is now an ordinary beer-house. Had his visit to Sheffield been only a few months later, my own forty years' residence would doubtless have been added to this list; for as Miss Gales and I walked up the Hartshead the other day, talking of '*auld lang syne*,' and not forgetful of the very uncomplimentary character which Mr. Howitt had given to that locality, what was our consternation to perceive that our old house was actually converted into a Tom-and-Jerry shop! But what do you think of Mr. Howitt's discovery that Wordsworth's system, which so long puzzled the reviewers, is a system of poetical Quakerism? You know

something about the 'haunts' of George Fox in this neighborhood ; and about *his* Journal, which I never saw ; but which I believe shows him to have been, with all his extravagance and enthusiasm, an indefatigable, as well as a sincere, laborer and sufferer in what he considered to be the cause of evangelical truth. Now my surprise and regret has always been, in reference to some of the most justly celebrated of Wordsworth's poems, that they should be so entirely devoid of all allusion to spiritual things, as the latter are disclosed in the Scriptures and in the experience of real Christians."

"In the month of April, this year," says Mr. Holland, "the whole kingdom was agitated with discussions relative to the effects likely to be produced by the operation of certain plans for the general instruction of the poor, propounded in a series of minutes issued by the Committee of the Council on Education, under the sanction of Lord Lansdowne, the president. The Congregational Dissenters, under the guidance of Mr. Edward Baines, of Leeds, were almost unanimous, not only in repudiating the proposed scheme, but in denouncing all government intervention or aid under any circumstances. For a time Montgomery appeared to entertain similar views, as harmonising with the objections to government interference which he had on previous occasions urged in his newspaper. The more, however, he examined the present proposal, the more was he convinced of its impartiality and advantages in a national point of view ; and having thus made up his mind, he joined his friend Samuel Bailey, Esq., in signing the petition from Sheffield in favor of the government scheme of education, in opposition to one which had been adopted at a public meeting *against* the measure, and to which he was urgently solicited to affix his name."

Mr. Holland, speaking of the odd style of praise bestowed upon an Independent minister of the city, by one of his parishioners: "Our parson," said the man, "is a devil for preaching." "It is curious," remarked Montgomery, "to see how fond certain profane talkers are of referring to the prince of darkness as a model of excellence. I recollect dining a few years since, at Derby, with a gentleman, who told me that he had played at cribbage all night in the coach. I replied, innocently enough, as I thought, 'I suppose, sir, you cannot sleep while travelling?' 'Oh, yes!' was the prompt reply, 'I sleep like the devil.' It occurred to me, at the time, to compose an essay on this theme, referring particularly to those arts and employments in which, it may be presumed, that he who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, is, indeed, a master-workman. I wrote only one passage, in which I described the devil's dream at the close of one of his busiest days, such as that of the battle of Waterloo. The subject was thrilling, but not pleasing;" a little too devilish, perhaps.

July. At the solicitation of, and in company with Mr. Holland, the poet visited Wath, his first stopping place after his flight from Mirfield. The railway carried them to within three miles of the village, to which they had a pleasant walk between shady hedges blooming with the flowers of Long Time Ago.

"We presently passed," says the friend, fondly treasuring every incident of the day, "the house where Montgomery used to visit Brameld, the village bookseller; and then Swinton Church, in which," he said, "he once addressed a congregation, including some members of the Wentworth House. You will readily believe that my fancy suggested — though I did not mention it — the contrast between the condition of the runaway boy at Wath feel-

ing his way to the metropolis, and that of the eloquent Christian poet — and layman — addressing a large audience in this church, in behalf of missionary enterprise, in the presence of Earl Fitzwilliam!

“After walking a little longer, we came in sight of the ‘Queen of Villages;’ the plain, but not inelegant spire of the church, the large hall, the very handsome Wesleyan chapel, and about a dozen good houses, forming, with the great number of intermingled orchard and other trees, with some beautiful scenery in the rich valley of the Dearne, a very pleasing picture. A few minutes more, and we were in Wath;—Montgomery, after an interval of forty years, once more perambulating a village, where, as he said, at the time of his residence, ‘there was not one shabby house, nor hardly an indigent family:’ adding, ‘I recollect, indeed, there was one pauper died during the overseership of my old master, Hunt, who had a passing-bell rung for him, which, I dare say, is not done even here now-a-days.’ As we sauntered along the street our friend mentioned the names of many persons who occupied the houses on either hand, half a century before; till coming to the good, plain gray-stone building, which you well enough remember — ‘and this,’ said he, ‘was our house, the second window over the door there being that of my bed-room.’ We entered, and found the tenant very courteous and ready to show us over the premises. We next proceeded to the house of the parish clerk to obtain access to the church and grave-ground, where the action of the poet’s *Vigil of St. Mark* is laid:

“‘That silent, solemn, simple spot,
The mouldering realm of peace,
Where human passions are forgot,
Where human follies cease.’

“On my naming to the sub-clerical functionary that my companion was Mr. Montgomery, of whom he might perhaps have heard, he promptly expressed his respect for ‘the gentleman of that name,’ whom he had once known as a youth in Mr. Hunt’s shop, and of whose subsequent fame as a poet he had often heard: but he seemed rather to doubt the identity of those characters with the individual before him. All suspicion, however, vanished instantly that Montgomery adverted to the more than local celebrity of the clerk’s father, ‘old Billy Evers,’ as a fiddler—his music having, we believe, occasionally mingled with that of Dr. Miller and his protégé Herschel, in those private concerts at the adjacent village of Bolton, which are mentioned by Southey in ‘The Doctor.’ We took a glass of wine with old Mr. Johnson, a hale and thriving village liquor-merchant, who received us most heartily, but startled me not a little by a remark to this effect: ‘Mr. Montgomery, I think you have never been married; I have only this very day been talking to wife about the verses you wrote on Hannah Turner!’ This was like catching a butterfly with a pair of blacksmith’s tongs; and I instantly changed the subject of conversation.”

The gentlemen reached home at evening, having had a day of more than anticipated enjoyment. The aged poet seemed to have renewed his youth:

“While old enchantments filled his mind
With scenes and seasons far behind —
Childhood, its smiles and tears,
Youth, with its flush of years,
Its morning clouds, and dewy prime,
More exquisitely touched by Time.

“Fancies again are springing,
Like May-flowers in the vales;
While hopes, long lost, are singing
From thorns, like nightingales—
And kindly spirits stir his blood
Like vernal airs that curl the flood.”

The sentiment of this exquisite little poem, *Youth Renewed*, we can readily believe a transcript of his experience. For we behold, with creeping age, he found it easy

“Thus sweetly to surrender
The present for the past;
In sprightly mood, yet tender,
Life’s burden down to cast.
This is to taste, from stage to stage,
Youth on the lees refined by age;
Like wine well kept and long,
Heady, nor harsh, nor strong,
With every annual cup, is quaffed
A richer, purer, mellow draught.”

A young clergyman, recently come to Sheffield, having sent the aged poet a poem of his own, Montgomery, with an acknowledgment of its pious sentiment and graceful versification, assumes the privilege of age, and candidly goes on: “I am prompted to encourage you to proceed and prosper, but this I durst not do to the most promising and aspiring youth of the age—an age in which almost every body that is anybody writes, and almost nobody reads poetry. By this I mean that verse, excellent verse, is the least marketable of all literary commodities, not one volume in twenty, by its sale, defraying the expense of printing and advertising. The only safeguard from absolute loss is to secure a subscription list from the author’s

personal friends sufficient to cover the outfit of the fragile bark. There probably never was a time in this country when more poetry, even good poetry, was composed by a multitude of contemporaries, and published in newspapers, magazines, and reviews, &c., than may now be found every day and everywhere. But this is mere *scrap-reading*, and the volumes from which these precious things are pilfered remain on the author's hands, or lie on the booksellers' shelves, till they are swept off in the course of nature, that is, of trade, by the dealers in waste paper. This withering information I have so often had occasion to convey, that the sight of a manuscript is a terror to me. To set you, as well as myself, at liberty, I will here break off at once by saying, that no particular reference has been made to your experiment in this precarious field of composition. I entered upon these statements solely to make you understand why I could offer no advice that might serve you, if you were disposed to follow, as you honestly and honorably might, poetry, as something more than a delightful occupation of a fine talent that might be turned to the benefit and blessing of others beside yourself."

A number of gentlemen in Liverpool, having formed a "Roscoe Club," determined upon holding a grand soir  e on the evening of the 1st of February. Among other persons to whom they addressed invitations, was Montgomery, who returned the following answer :

"The Mount, January 29, 1848.

"GENTLEMEN,

"With my best thanks for the courteous invitation to the intended soir  e of your members, on Tuesday next, I am under the necessity of stating, that I have neither health nor strength to avail myself of the privilege. For

some time past, I have forborne to take that active part, which was once my delight, in the affairs of our local institutions, and have consequently declined occasional overtures to be a sharer in similar engagements elsewhere. When 'the grasshopper is a burden,' enjoyments, not less than labors, become too stimulating and exhausting to an enfeebled frame and discouraged mind, for such are mine—the one never vigorous, and the other never sanguine—though from boyhood, sufficiently aspiring to long for, and aim at, some distinction among those who were themselves distinguished in poetry and criticism, the arts which I loved most.

"Forty years ago, when I was timidly creeping out of obscurity, as an unknown and unpatronised adventurer, both in verse and prose, Mr. Roscoe spontaneously marked me; and, in several communications through the post, gave me both counsels and consolations, which were peculiarly seasonable, when I lay under the ban of the Edinburgh reviewers, and the English journalists seemed afraid to say a good word for an excommunicated intruder 'on the lower slopes of Parnassus.' Mr. Roscoe's favorable sentiments, precious in themselves, were doubly so as pledges to my hopes—that compositions which such a man commended would, to some extent, 'fit audience find, though few,' in other quarters where judgment was not less free, though less arbitrary (in the hard sense of the word), than before a court of infallible inquisitors, whose motto was, '*Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur*,' but which ought to have been, '*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' intrate*.'

"I am glad of the opportunity of acknowledging my early obligation to your amiable and eminent fellow-citizen, and especially to avail myself of this opportunity, because

it is one in a thousand, when his townspeople of a second and third generation, from that with which he was contemporary, have determined to raise a monument worthy of themselves, because worthy of him, to commemorate his services and their gratitude, not in perishable marble or brass, but in a living, breathing, and intellectual form, which ought never to die, but perpetuate its existence through an endless succession of its members, enjoying, diffusing, and bequeathing to Liverpool, while it lasts, the blessings which accrued to its inhabitants by the residence among them of one who, by importing into its harbor the treasures of Tuscan literature, made them so current through the whole island, that while he ruled the public taste by the revival of their glories in the records of their deeds, the spirits of the Medici seemed to exercise sovereignty on the banks of the Mersey, as formerly on those of the Arno, and Liverpool became the Florence of Britain, from whence the commerce of elegant literature was carried wherever the English and Italian languages were understood.

“The names of few of our illustrious poets and men of letters are distinctly associated with the names of the places where they were born, or in which they flourished; the metropolis most frequently having been the rendezvous and the market for books and their authors. Your great townsman so exalted the provincial press, that its character thenceforward has never been so disparaged as formerly (perhaps) it deserved to be, for the meanness of its issues, and the poverty of its performances. Bristol and Liverpool contemporaneously redeemed and established their credit so signally, that with the former the names of Wordsworth, and Southey, and Coleridge, are not yet divorced from the city of their first appearance, and lost in the un-

meaning form of "lake poets," while that of Roscoe is so intimately linked with Liverpool, that he cannot be mentioned, or remembered even without the honorable distinction to himself and his residence, '*Roscoe of Liverpool!*' The collocation here is unexceptionable and unambiguous. As '*Roscoe,*' then, cannot be divided from '*Liverpool,*' let '*Liverpool*' never be unmindful of her '*Roscoe,*' or cease to benefit by the influence and the effects of his long and useful connection with it in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

"These are crude remarks, but accept them, as they have come from my heart through my pen, for I have not time to revise them."

Another breach was now made in the narrowing circle of Montgomery's old friends and friendships in the death of Samuel Roberts, Esq., at his residence, Park Grange, near Sheffield, in the 86th year of his age. This was July 24th, 1848.

"Three of my fellow-pilgrims have now finished their course, and left me the last of four friends," he says, mournfully;—an intimacy "born to do benefits," having none of the "delirious blood and wicked spells" of the wine bottle with its long train of remorseful memories.

Having written a short obituary of him, "I could not go into any detail of my friend's course of life," he writes to Mr. Holland; "he was one of whom little could not be said, if anything were attempted. Four-and-twenty years ago, towards the close of *The Pelican Island*, I said,

"The world grows darker, lonelier, and more silent,
As I go down into the vale of tears.

“You will understand this better twenty and four years hence, and also find out that there is something to a living man darker than darkness, more lonely than loneliness, more silent than silence. What is that? The space in our eye, our ear, and our mind, which the presence of a friend once filled, and which imagination itself cannot now fill. Infinite space, invisible, inaudible, dimensionless, is not more inapprehensible than that remembered range in which, to us, he lived, moved, and had a being. ‘Absent *from* the body,’ is a far different separation from that which the earth’s diameter interposes between two breathing conscious beings, *each present with himself* and contemporary with the other, but as utterly beyond personal communication as the living with the dead, or the dwellers in the dust, each resting in his bed, side by side. I must not rhapsodize any more. We two *yet* can meet and part; and how much of life’s acting and suffering these two monosyllables comprehend! I have only another to add; and that is that I am, very sincerely, your *Friend*.”

On the 29th Mr. Roberts was interred at Church-Anston. Montgomery attended the funeral — a sincere as well as a ceremonial mourner; his feelings, after reaching home, being embodied in the following lines:

“We will remember thee in love:
Thy race is run — thy work is done;
Now rest in peace,
Where sin, and toil, and suffering cease;
Meanwhile, in hope to meet above,
When these with us no more shall be,
In love we will remember thee.”

On opening the will of the deceased, although it did not comprise any formal testamentary bequest to any of his friends, it contained a pencilled memorandum to the effect, that the executor (Samuel Roberts, Jun.) should give some memento of his late father's esteem to the poet: "a wish, which we happen to know," says Mr. Holland, "was not less cheerfully than promptly and liberally realized by a present of one hundred guineas."

CHAPTER XX.

EXTINCTION OF THE IRIS — LIFE OF KEATS — SHELLEY — MISSIONARY JUBILEE — TRACT SOCIETY JUBILEE — SICKNESS — POEMS — RECOVERY — VISIT TO FULNECK — CELEBRATION OF HIS BIRTH-DAY — TREE-PLANTING AT THE MOUNT — VISIT TO BUXTON.

IN September, 1848, the *Iris*, which Montgomery established fifty-four years before, and which at one period was the only newspaper in Sheffield, closed its existence. A few weeks later, the Sheffield Mercury, with which Mr. Holland had been connected for fifteen years, merged itself into a new sheet, and thus an interesting link between the old editor and the younger, his future biographer, was broken.

"Every Saturday afternoon," Mr. Holland tells us, "he took care to be found in his room at the Music Hall, because at 4 o'clock, to a minute, the beloved and venerable bard uniformly made his appearance, gliding down the passage as quietly as a ghost; and after sitting and chatting for half an hour, carried off with him the newspaper."

"And so this is the last Sheffield Mercury we are to have, and you are no longer Mr. Editor," said Montgomery, on his last visit to this old haunt; "I confess I am sorry on every account."

"So the 'march of intellect' leaves behind first one and then another, in succession," answered his friend; "its hard hoof, which, as you once intimated, trampled on you

so sternly nearly thirty years ago, has now trodden me down."

"You must come up to The Mount, and let us talk over these momentous changes;" an invitation which needed no renewal, for Mr. Holland's society and friendship now formed almost a daily part of Montgomery's social enjoyment.

A day or two after, we find him at The Mount, bringing the *Life of Keats* by Milnes, for the poet's perusal.

"Glad to see it," answered Montgomery, "though I feel loth just now to be drawn away from a very interesting subject—the journal of the founder of the Quakers, an extraordinary book, which I wonder I never read before. I can understand the religion of George Fox better than the poetry of Bysshe Shelley and John Keats. Members of the Society of Friends—to their honor be it spoken—were among the earliest advocates for the emancipation of slaves."

"Yes," answered Mr. Holland, "but it is curious to perceive that, even among *them*, the principle, in its practical application at least, was one of growth; for you will find George Fox, on his visit to the West Indies, in 1671, telling the planters that, with respect to their 'negroes or blacks, they should endeavor to train them up in the fear of God; as well them that were bought with their money, as them that were born in their families, that all might come to the knowledge of the Lord. I desired them also,' he adds, 'that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some hath been, and is; and that after certain years of servitude they would make them free.' I do not know how the thing strikes you, but to me it appears that a good deal of the reproach which,

in connection with current reports of the growth and atrocities of the slave trade as now clandestinely carried on, we so constantly find to be cast upon the party who paid the twenty millions of British money for emancipation, originated with those who are at best but half-hearted abolitionists themselves."

"I am afraid there is too much truth in your remark," rejoined Montgomery. "One does not always catch a new idea at a public meeting; but there was to me something of novelty in an anecdote told by one of the speakers at the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting on Monday night:—Two British sailors were engaged in assisting at the debarkation of a cargo of negroes from a captured slaver; on seeing the shocking condition of the poor creatures as they were brought up, and the sinister looks of the captain, who was thus disappointed of his prey—'Jack,' exclaimed one of the sailors to his companion, 'the devil will be sure to have that fellow.' 'Dost thou really think so?' was the reply of his shipmate. 'To be sure he will; or else what's the use of having a devil?' This story," proceeded Montgomery, "reminded me of one which I heard soon after I came to Sheffield; there appeared in some of the meetings of the *Jacobins*, as they were at that time called, an elderly man of the name of Gibbs; he was regarded, and no doubt correctly, by Mr. Gales and others, as a Government spy, for he had played that part in America during the War of Independence. Franklin, who knew him, is said to have exclaimed, 'If God had not made a hell, he ought to make one for the punishment of such miscreants as Gibbs!' This observation savors somewhat of profanity; but it is remarkable that the philosophic statesman and the rude sailor were alike horrified at atrocities, for which they saw no competent retribution in this world."

Having read Keats's life, brought him by his friend, he confessed it a work of considerable elegance and a labor of love, but fails in being convinced that Keats, had he lived would ever have proved himself a great poet.

"It is very probable," he said, "that if, instead of falling early and entirely into the so-called 'Cockney-school,' admirably described by Mr. Milnes, Keats had been thrown among the 'Lakists,' the result might have been every way more favorable; for the 'worship of Nature,' however remote from the spirit of Christianity, is at least a thousand-fold more allied to the sympathies of universal humanity, than any reflex image, however brilliant, which modern ingenuity can exhibit of the old mythologies of Greece and Rome. The sonnets are to me the green spots in the sparkling but arid poetry of Keats."

At the annual meeting of the Church Missionary Society, held in Exeter Hall on the 2d of May this year, it was resolved to commemorate the jubilee of that institution in all its departments throughout the world. "Montgomery," Mr. Holland tells us, "was requested by Mr. Bickersteth to compose a hymn for the occasion; with this request the poet gladly complied, and in due course this composition, commencing, "The King of Glory we proclaim," was not only printed and circulated in its original form, wherever the mother-tongue of the Church of England found an utterance in her services, but it was translated also into Tamul, for the use of the native converts in Tinnevely, Madras, and Ceylon." This high festival was appropriately held on the first of November, a day which the Church has dedicated to the commemoration of the "one communion and fellowship" in which all the members of Christ's mystical body are knit together; and the subject is adverted

to here somewhat in detail by his loving friend Holland, "because," as he says, "Montgomery is, perhaps, the only Christian poet who had ever the high distinction of being called upon by the Church of Christ to compose, and by the great Head of that Church permitted to take part in singing, a strain which might literally be said to have surrounded the earth with one unrolled melody, carried on simultaneously with an entire 'circuit of the sun.'" This holy concord of evangelical churchmen in Great Britain, with their brethren in the Lord scattered throughout "all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," in the same intercessory and eucharistical strains, is thus anticipated in one of the tracts published at the time :

"Before the auspicious day dawns upon us, the sun will have risen in the far East, and shone upon some even in China, the latest of the missions of the Society, where little companies will be gathered together in the name of the Lord. India and Ceylon will next swell the chorus with their numerous bands of native Christians, all taught to sing the same new song, though in various tongues (the Bengalee, Hindoo, Teloogoo, Tamul, Singhalese, Malayalim, Mahratta) — East Africa, with its as yet lisping babes in Christ. — Egypt, Smyrna, and Syria, the scanty representatives of the ancient Arabic and Greek tongues — the newly discovered tribes of West Africa at Abbeokouta will swell the strains. And then the full concert of voices from the elder brethren of Great Britain, throughout the various Associations of our land — not on this day meeting as almoners to commiserate the destitute, but as fellow-helpers of the joy of brethren in the Lord — like the 'joyful mother' with her children — grown up to a spiritual equality, and to an intelligent participation in divine worship. Then, as the sun completes his circuit, the hearty voices of

liberated Africans, made 'free indeed' by the early and tearful labors of this Society—soon to be responded to across the wide Atlantic by their kindred race, the emancipated laborers of the West Indies, and from the free wanderers of North-West America. Then, when the shades of evening have closed the lips of the eastern tribes, ere yet the song has died away from the lips of the mother Churches of Great Britain, the New Zealander will prolong the universal anthem with the manly but softened tones of that noble race. Thus for a double day—'from the going forth of the sun from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it'—for twenty-four hours, the Jubilee notes will be prolonged." *

"The poet had only just closed his part in the theme of thanksgiving for the mercies which had marked the first fifty years' proceedings of the Church Missionary Associations," his biographer goes on to say, "when he was called upon, and consented to renew the strain on the recurrence of a similar event in the history of a kindred institution—the Religious Tract Society. At the jubilee festival of this 'Parent of the Bible Society,' which was held at Queen street Chapel, Sheffield, November 13, Montgomery presided; and, although he made no formal speech, he read a copy of original verses, the appropriateness of which to the occasion will be obvious from the following extract, which will also show that, however the venerable poet might mistrust his lips or his memory in the advocacy of a cause that had never lacked his active support throughout the whole half century of its existence, his right hand had lost none of its cunning in embodying a fine thought in fitting rhyme:

* Jubilee Tracts, No. 1, p. 9.

- “ ‘The sunbeams, infinitely small,
In numbers numberless,
Reveal, pervade, illumine all
Nature’s void wilderness.
- “ ‘But, meeting worlds upon their way,
Wrapt in primeval night,
In language without sound, they say
To each — *God sends you light.*
- “ ‘Anon, with beauty, life, and love,
Those wandering planets glow,
And shine themselves as stars above,
On gazers from below.
- “ ‘Oh! could the first archangel’s eye
In everlasting space,
Through all the mazes of the sky
A single sunbeam trace!
- “ ‘He might behold that lovely one
Its destiny fulfill,
As punctual as the parent sun
Performs its Maker’s will.
- “ ‘The Sun of Righteousness, with rays
Of uncreated light,
His power and glory thus displays
Through nature’s darkest night.
- “ ‘Rays from that Sun of Righteousness
Our humble missiles dart;
Mighty at once to wound and bless,
To break and bind the heart.
- “ ‘And could the first archangel’s sight
The least of these pursue,
He might record — in its brief flight,
Each had a work to do.’ ”

As a contrast between the operations of the Tract Society in 1798 and 1848, Montgomery pointed with much interest to what might, without impropriety, be called a *Polyglott* tract, circulated in Sheffield at the latter date; it was in English, French, German, Italian, Welsh, and native Irish!

The winter of 1849 battered the decaying tabernacle of the aged poet. Fever-turns confined him to his bed, a slight paralysis affected one of his arms, and a severe inflammation attacked one of his eyes. His friends became alarmed; and Miss Gales wrote to his brother Robert. The tidings brought to his bedside a favorite niece, one Betsey Montgomery, the beautiful and blooming girl who charmed her uncle on her first visit to Sheffield, twenty-eight years before, now Mrs. Foster, a gentle and sympathizing matron, better qualified perhaps to be the nurse and comfort of her aged relative.

Mr. Holland proves the attentive friend, ever at The Mount, answering letters, reading favorite authors, or rehearsing the news of the day.

"He placed in my hands," he tells us of one of their interviews, "transcripts of a portion of his original Hymns, several of which, he said, I should find quite new to me. He wished me to read aloud the first line of each composition; and, as I did so, he not only gave me a little history of the origin of most of them, but indicated such as he thought I had not seen before. Several of the latter I read through; but witnessing the strong emotions which they excited in the poet's mind, and wishing also to avoid participation in such a scene of trying sympathy, I apologized and desisted. 'Read on,' said he, 'I am glad to hear you; the words recall the feelings which first suggested them, and it is good for me to feel affected and humbled

by the terms in which I have endeavored to provide for the expression of similar religious experience in others. As all my hymns embody some portions of the history of the joys or sorrows, the hopes and the fears of this poor heart, so I cannot doubt that they will be found an acceptable vehicle of expression of the experience of many of my fellow-creatures who may be similarly exercised during the pilgrimage of their Christian life.' "

We can hardly forgive Mr. Holland for not eliciting and recording the biographical antecedents which gave them birth, for are they not experiences of

—— "the truths, for whose sweet sake
We to ourselves and to our God are dear?"

None of his poems more choicely embodies his feelings at this time than *At Home in Heaven*, glimpses of which break on the believer's eye as "life's little day draws nearer to its close," and "that evening-time when it shall be light" dawns upon his soul:

"Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.

"My Father's house on high —
Home of my soul — how near,
At times, to Faith's foreseeing eye
The golden gates appear!

"Ah! then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.

“Yet clouds will intervene,
And all my prospect flies;
Like Noah's dove, I flit between
Rough seas and stormy skies.

“Anon the clouds disperse,
The winds and waters cease,
While sweetly o'er my gladdened heart
Expands the bow of peace.”

“I have received,” he once said, “directly and indirectly more testimonials of approbation in reference to those verses than perhaps any other which I have written of the same class, with the exception of those on Prayer.”

The poem commences “For ever with the Lord,” and ends with

“That resurrection-word!
That shout of victory!
Once more — ‘For ever with the Lord!’
Amen, so let it be.”

We have only extracted the part of a beautiful whole.

Many days' march yet to the heavenly home. Healing came and Montgomery was again able to leave his room, and take his old seat at the table and the fire-side.

“How grateful after an interval of sickness is the return to common food,” he exclaimed.

“Nor is the least appropriate condiment,” rejoined a friend, “‘a cheerful heart,’ as the poet says, ‘that tastes those gifts with joy.’”

“If Addison had written nothing but those two lines,” said Montgomery, “they ought to be sufficient to transmit

his name to posterity ; they admirably express a striking sentiment which, I believe, occurs nowhere else in the whole range of our popular hymnology, and which is, perhaps, but rarely appreciated as it deserves to be by many persons who are very familiar with the poem from which your quotation is derived."

After three months' imprisonment within doors, he again reappeared in the streets — but "how faded and infirm !" said the passers by.

"Early in the month of April," — we extract from his English biography, — "he was sufficiently recovered to make a visit to Fulneck, where he enjoyed, with his brethren, those solemnities which mark the festival of Easter in the Moravian communities, especially the 'Love Feast,' which is held on what they call the 'great Sabbath,' or Saturday, which occurs between the days on which all the Western churches commemorate the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. Calling on Mr. Holland immediately after his return to Sheffield, the poet was evidently still under the peculiar influence of those feelings which he had experienced during his brief but hallowed intercourse with *Alma Mater* ; the music, the singing, the prayers and the addresses of the occasion, strongly recalling similar exercises of the paschal season in the days of his childhood and youth."

One fine morning in May, Mr. Law, the curator of the Sheffield Botanical Gardens, happening to meet Montgomery and Miss Gales walking in those beautiful grounds, when no other company were present, asked the poet to gratify him by planting an oak. The request was at once complied with. He afterwards, at the request of the committee, planted two Chilian pines at the head of the principal walk, and immediately in front of the conservatory.

His 78th year also, a few months afterwards, was inaugurated by a tree-planting; Mrs. Mitchell, one of the residents of The Mount, having gracefully got up a little fête champêtre on his birth-day, "that his name might live on The Mount long after he became a 'Tree of Life at God's right hand.'"

On a bright Saturday afternoon, the little party escorted him from his own door to the centre of the lawn, where the gardener gave him a young beech-sapling, which, with Mrs. Mitchell's help, he put into the soil. "I thank you, my dear sir! may you see many winters' snow upon its naked branches, and many spring renewals of its beautiful foliage."

"If all that is done under the sun this day," said the aged man, "were to be recorded in a book, this transaction would appear very insignificant, but the planting of a tree in the midst of our little world of The Mount is an event of more than every day importance to us, assembling us to witness the introduction of a new object to our eye, a new companion of our walks within this pleasant enclosure, and a new association of ideas on which memory may hereafter sometimes delight to dwell.

"When a child is born," he continued more gravely, "there is only one thing that can be surely foretold concerning its destiny — that sooner or later it will die. Between the cradle and the grave there arise numberless changes and contingencies, kept hidden in the councils of God, and never by searching to be known, till their gradual development — their mysteries are manifestly revealed, and their purposes understood. When a tree springs out of the ground, something different may be certified; and here I might take up my parable, and prophesy concerning this which we have seen planted to-day, that from henceforth,

in the ordinary dispensation of Providence, it may be expected to rise to maturity, and there continue till, if spared by the axe and the storm, it has fulfilled every purpose for which it was created, and sustained through its appointed existence. And how will it do this? Simply by never losing a moment of time, and never misspending one.

“Time is lost by not occupying it; and misspent by not occupying it well. O how different a being in your presence had the utterer of these words been, if at this hour it could have been said of him, through seventy-seven years of pilgrimage on earth (to borrow the language of an inspired prophet), ‘As the days of a tree only have been his days,’ not in number only, but in the performance of duties! Far otherwise, however, I must testify of myself. Time is lost in not employing it, and misspent in employing it ill. Millions of moments have I lost by idleness, and millions more have I misspent, if not doing positive evil (though no small portion may be charged to that account), misspent in not doing that which alone is good in the sight of God. It needs no affectation of humility to make this confession before my friends around me on this peculiar occasion, when they are delighting to do me honor, which I can only return, as I do, with gratitude. I trust I have not gone beyond the license of the occasion so pointedly personal: nor will it be out of place or out of season, if I express my heart’s desire and prayer, that we may henceforth, by the grace of God, which alone can enable us, — make the tree thus planted an example and an argument, that what the tree unconsciously, yet unvaryingly, does, we may conscientiously and heartily do at all times, and under all circumstances; so shall God, even our own God, give us his blessing, and make us blessings to one another in our gen-

eration ; so may we all be trees of righteousness — trees of his own planting here ; and in his Paradise above undying trees of life, by the river of life flowing out of the throne of God and the Lamb.”

“The brightness of the day,” says one of the party, “the general beauty of the landscape — the age and venerable aspect of the speaker — the attention of the group which surrounded him — a thousand associations of the past in his history — the light in which imagination beheld the after-interest of the tree just planted, conspired to give a peculiar charm to the foregoing expressions.

“At the close of the address the company were invited by Mr. Mitchell to return to his house, and drink a glass of wine in honor of the occasion. Here, again, they found that the ingenuity of their hostess had provided an appropriate memento of the day for the children present, in the shape of a dozen Testaments, each appropriately inscribed, and presented by the hand of Montgomery, and each having on its first leaf the following lines :

“Behold the book whose leaves display
Jesus, the Life, the Truth, the Way.
Read it with diligence and prayer :
Seek it and you will find him there.

“J. M.”

The next day he gave Mrs. Mitchell the following lines, written on an embossed card :

“Live long, live well, fair Beechen Tree !
And oh ! that I might live like thee,
Never to lose one moment more,
As millions I have lost before ;

Nor e'er misspend another lent,
As millions past have been misspent;
Each in our place would then fulfill
Our Maker and our Master's will.

"Moments to ages train a tree;
To man, they bring eternity.
Though as the tree falls, so it lies,
Man ends not thus; unless he rise,
His fall is final — spirit never dies."

As pilgrims were pointed to the hoary head of the Penshurst Oak, or sat reverently beneath the "pensile boughs" of Pope's Willow, or wrought "traps" from Shakespeare's immortal Mulberry, so might travellers have sought this Beech tree on The Mount, to invoke the holy fervors of the Bard of Sheffield — but for the ruthless hand of mischief, which a few months later destroyed many an arboreal ornament of the lawn, and the Beechen Tree among the rest.

An August flitting to Buxton. Miss Gales accompanies him.

"Time takes so much killing," he playfully remarks to a correspondent, a few days after his arrival, in excuse for not having written earlier, "when you have nothing else to do with him, that there seems no end of the work, and indeed there is none; for *in doing nothing*, as there is no progress, there can be no end; while in doing everything you cannot escape from a finality in a world where all that *is* is mortal, and that only which *is not* is interminable."

After jotting down the minor interests of the journey for his friend's perusal, he continues:

"On Monday, however, I did seriously sit down to the duty, but was interrupted by being carried off in Mr. Black-

well's carriage in the forenoon, in one direction among the mountains, and in the afternoon, on a '*visit of mercy*,' on behalf of our kind-hearted neighbor, Mrs. Mitchell, who was here a few weeks ago, to the cottage of a poor family; that errand Miss G. and I performed on foot; and if you have an opportunity of calling on Mrs. M., next door to us, at The Mount, please to tell her that we delivered her packet to the poor mother, saw her and her baby (the latter a very weakly little thing, which she nurses most tenderly) and her maimed husband, who is apparently recovering, though slowly, from his awful accident. How ought such as I to be humbled at the sight of *real poverty* and severe suffering borne with quiet, and patience, and resignation to the will of the Lord, even where they little understand his loving kindness, from the neglect of those who ought to be their teachers and exemplars. However, in all the dark places of this land, whatever may be said of Methodists or Methodism, of Fly-Sheets and their authors, it is *a glorious thing* to say of that people, that, go wherever you will, through the length and breadth of this whole land (of England, at least), *you can hardly get out of the sound of the gospel from Wesleyan lips*. In this I do rejoice, and will rejoice; and may their sound continue to go forth to the ends of the earth, speaking in all the languages under heaven! I must end here. Miss Gales sends kind regards, and believe me ever truly."

A fortnight's abandonment to the social varieties of Buxton, and a few days at dear Fulneck, renovated the elderly pair, and they returned to Sheffield early in September to receive the Archbishop of York, who had engaged to preach a sermon in behalf of the General Infirmary, a charity in which the poet was strongly interested.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION—EBENEZER ELLIOTT—MORAVIAN HYMN-BOOK—LETTER TO MR. LATROBE—NEW EDITION OF HIS WORKS—LETTER FROM LUCY AIKIN—TENNYSON—THE DEAKIN CHARITY—ANTI-CATHOLIC MEETING—CRYSTAL PALACE—BIRTH-DAY PRESENTS—MONTGOMERY MEDAL—MEMORIAL TREES—VISIT TO THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN—LECTURE BEFORE THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY—MEETING OF THE METHODIST CONFERENCE—GRAY'S POETRY—"ORIGINAL HYMNS" FROM LUCY AIKIN—AUTUMN TRAIT—AT HIS POST TO THE LAST—DEATH—FUNERAL—CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH now exceedingly averse to making his appearance in public, Montgomery consented to dine with the ministers of "The Congregational Union," assembled at Sheffield, October, 1849. In doing this, he not only yielded to the importunity of old friends, who were anxious to gratify their younger brethren by even a brief interview with one who had taken so active a part with their fathers in the formation and advancement of their religious institutions, but, by occupying a place at the right hand of the Rev. President of the meeting, testified his unabated oneness of spirit with this section of the Church of Christ. His health being proposed from the chair, he was led to make a short speech, in which he adverted to his first knowledge of the meetings and worship of the Independents, by casually attending, when a youth, and while residing at Wath, the cottage-preaching of a man whose name

had passed into the history of that revival of religion begun by the Methodists, namely, the Rev. Mr. Graves, one of six students who had previously been expelled from the University of Oxford for "singing, praying, and expounding the Scriptures." He mentioned also, as indeed he had done on previous occasions, that one of the very first persons whose friendship he enjoyed, after he came to reside at Sheffield, was a man who held no second place among Congregational theologians, — the Rev. John Pye Smith, D.D. "This kind friend," added the speaker, with much *naïveté* and feeling, and amid the reiterated cheers of his audience, "when on a certain occasion, I had to leave Sheffield for six months, stepped into my place, and looked after my affairs: we were, indeed, alike young and inexperienced politicians, committing many mistakes, and getting into some scrapes, which the possession of older and colder heads might probably have enabled us to avoid."

Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn-Law Rhymer," died on the 1st of December, and the publisher of the Sheffield Independent, while preparing a memoir of the poet for that paper, wrote to Montgomery to ask if he could furnish any particulars; the following was his reply:

"The Mount, December 6, 1849.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am sorry that I cannot serve you with any information respecting the late Mr. Ebenezer Elliott, of whose decease I was not aware till I received your letter. I do not remember ever having been for an hour in his company. Our occasional meetings were few, and short, and far between, though he was known and admired by me as a poet before the world would either know or honor him

as such. He published several small volumes at intervals, the manuscripts of which (mostly) he had confidentially submitted to me; and they had my best encouragement on the ground of their merit; but not one of these could command public attention, till he broke out in the ‘Corn-Law Rhymes,’ as Waller said of Denham, ‘like the Irish Rebellion, *forty thousand strong*, when nobody thought of such a thing.’ Then, indeed, he compelled both astonishment and commendation from all manner of critics—Whig, Tory, and Radical—reviewers vying with each other who should most magnanimously extol the talents which they had either not discovered or had superciliously overlooked, till, for their own credit, they could no longer hold their peace, or affect to despise what they had not had heart to acknowledge when their countenance would have done service to the struggling author. A few of his smaller pieces did find their way into the *Iris*, but I believe these were all republished by himself in his succeeding miscarrying volumes. I, however, am quite willing to hazard any critical credit by avowing my persuasion that, in originality, power, and even beauty—when he chose to be beautiful—he might have measured heads beside Byron in tremendous energy,—Crabbe, in graphic description, and Coleridge, in effusions of domestic tenderness; while in intense sympathy with the poor, in whatever he deemed their wrongs or their sufferings, he excelled them all, and perhaps everybody else among his contemporaries in prose or verse. He was, in a transcendental sense, the *Poet of the Poor*, whom, if not always ‘*wisely*,’ I at least dare not say he loved ‘*too well*.’ His personal character, his fortunes, and his genius would require, and they deserve, a full investigation, as furnishing an extraordinary study of human nature.”

A book was published this year which had cost our poet no little study and solicitude—a revised edition of the Moravian Hymn Book.

As early as 1835, he was officially invited by a Conference of the Brethren's Church to undertake an entire revision of their large Hymn Book. The earliest specimens of Moravian psalmody in English appeared in 1746, a curious volume, which gave place ten years later to one prepared by Bishop Gambold, and published by "authority." This book had formed the basis of repeated editions since 1789, each expurgated and refined in its turn, until the book has assumed its final character in the version issued in 1849 under the prudent and zealous co-operation of "Brother James Montgomery" and the authorities of the Brethren's Church in Great Britain.

"The labor," Mr. Holland tells us, "which Montgomery bestowed upon this work, can only be apprehended by any one who will compare, as we have done, the matter of the book now in use in the Brethren's English congregations with the text of the same book—if, indeed, it can be called the same—previous to the last revision. The volume contains 1200 Hymns; and it is hardly too much to say, that the time and thought spent in the reformation of such a mass of matter, much of it of a peculiar character, was not less than would have sufficed for the composition of a like quantity of original verse. Whether the result has been, in every respect, equal in value to the amount of toil and skill expended on the task, has been doubted by some persons; for the poet, having had to deal with compositions which had already undergone repeated ordeals of a similar kind at the hands of men who attached much more importance to directness of doctrinal meaning, and fervor of pious expression, than to anything

like poetic euphony or grace, he was often compelled either to change an obsolete or equivocal term, to soften down a too striking sentiment into a general meaning, or entirely to remodel the structure of a verse, or even of a whole hymn. The inevitable consequence of this procedure has been, that while the greater portion of the book has been rendered such as almost any congregation of Christians might adopt as to the sentiments, and any experienced poet approve as to the style, many of the hymns have certainly lost a good deal of their original and peculiar flavor—their ‘race,’ or, as Dr. Johnson explains it, ‘the flavor of the soil on which they grew.’”

As illustrating at once a feature of the Moravian communities and the spirituality of Montgomery's mind, it may be mentioned that he was appointed, as he had been on previous occasions, one of the “intercessors” of the Brethren's congregation at Fulneck, for the first quarter of the year 1850. This office requires that the persons nominated to it “by lot, in the Elders' Conference,” simultaneously devote a set evening in the week to prayer in behalf of the religious body to which they belong.

Calling one morning on Mr. Holland, to procure the volumes of the Quarterly Review for the years 1811–1812, “I have,” he said, “just been reading the third volume of the Life of Southey, and I concluded it with painful feelings in reference to the tone of ignorance and prejudice in which he speaks of evangelical religion in general, and of Christian missions in particular. I must, of course, have read the articles in question, when first published, but with less interest, as not then certainly knowing who was the author: besides, the letters just printed breathe a spirit of triumph on the part of the reviewer, both as to his purpose

and materials of defamation, that stimulates my curiosity to see how he really dealt with what he evidently so little either understood or approved."

Rev. Mr. Latrobe wishing to dedicate his little volume of songs and hymns to him, Montgomery thus replied :

"Sheffield, June 7, 1850.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"I thank you heartily for meeting my difficulty on the subject of the proposed inscription of your forthcoming Hymns to myself, — in a manner to which I cannot pretend to offer any objection. . . . What you say concerning the late Mr. Wordsworth affected me much, as corresponding nearly with certain strictures of my own on the characteristics of his moral system, as developed especially throughout his greatest poem, 'The Excursion;' on that work, at its first appearance, I wrote a critique for the 'Eclectic Review,' in which I intimated, in language as courteous as I could, that he *forbore*, when he describes his solitary skeptic searching from every other imaginable source, for consolation or hope, in his bewilderment of mind, — the poet *forbore* sending him to the only fountain whence refreshment and rest can be found for a wounded spirit and a heavy-laden soul, — the Gospel of Christ; at the same time frigidly as well as vainly, though with wonderful pomp of diction and splendor of illustration, ascribing to the *healing influences of Nature through her elementary operations*, effects, which nothing but the grace of God can produce. Our good old brother Gambold's hymn, "That I am thine, my Lord, my God," reveals a personal *experience*, in comparison of which all the theories and speculations of philosophers and philosophy falsely so

called, are vanities of vanity, and vexations of spirit, utterly unappeasing to the immortal part of mortal man. But I must break off; I have neither hand nor heart to proceed further than to pray that I could now sit down, and sing even to myself that precious testimony, laying the whole emphasis of my soul upon every line, especially on the second clause of the eighth verse :

“ ‘ Ah! my heart throbs, and seizes fast
That covenant which will ever last ;
It knows — it knows these things are true.’

“ May you, and I, and all who may hereafter read or sing our hymns, be enabled to witness the same good confession !”

May 6th. He presided, as usual, at the Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary in Sheffield.

Copies of the new edition of his works, which he was desirous of living to see, reached him on that day.

The publishers having been instructed to transmit a copy to his old friend, Lucy Aikin, she acknowledges it with all her youthful vivacity :

“ Wimbledon, May 23d, 1850.

“ Accept my best thanks, my dear old friend, for the token of continued kind remembrance which I have received from you in the shape of a copy of the new edition of your poems. I rejoiced to see them in a shape so accessible to ‘ the million,’ to use a fashionable phrase suited to our gigantic notions. I rejoiced to find them retaining all their popularity after so many years, and thus giving proof how true an echo they find in the hearts and imaginations of readers.

“ It pleased me even more to find that you still retained

health and vigor to continue writing, and to undertake the labor of conducting so goodly a volume through the press. Would that I could still exert such energies! but I have long given up the use of the pen from discouragement, and contented myself with feeding on the minds of others, and sometimes introducing young spirits to the works of the immortal masters.

“Here, at Wimbledon, I reside under the roof of my dear brother Charles’s eldest daughter, Mrs. Le Breton, with her husband and eight children, mostly girls, so that objects of tender interest are not wanting to me.

“The last particular account of you which I heard, was from my old friends, the Aston Yateses, and a very pleasant picture they drew of you in your retirement. It seemed as if your health continued good, which I hope is still the case, and that you yet exchange gallantries with the young ladies [*i.e.*, the Muses]. I am persuaded that the poetical temperament retains its elasticity best of all. I used to observe this in Mrs. Barbauld, who never lost her youthfulness of fancy. My dear brother Arthur, now the only brother left me, continues to occupy himself with chemistry. He still lectures on this science at Guy’s Hospital, besides employing himself very diligently in the many analyses which he is employed to make for various purposes. A happier old man I nowhere know, and certainly not a more benevolent one.

“You never visit London now, I fear; and, as for me, my longest journeys, for some years past, have stretched no further than the eight miles between Wimbledon and London. In this world, therefore, in all human probability, we shall meet no more; but we may still think of each other with esteem and affection, and hope to meet in that world whither so many of our nearest and dearest have taken their flight before us.”

Tennyson's "In Memoriam" is the talk of the literary world. Has Montgomery read it? He replies:—"I have read the poem carefully, I should say, resolutely through, which I suspect not ten other persons in Sheffield have done; but I confess I cannot enjoy it. The title-page itself is an affectation of unmeaning simplicity, so much so, indeed, that I, who was not otherwise in the poet's secret, was some time before I could make out his subject from the opening verses, which, while they flowed as smoothly and brightly as transparent oil over a polished surface, might apply to a butterfly, or a bird, or a lady, as well as to the individual who I found after a while was indicated as their subject. If I had published such a volume forty years ago, Jeffrey would have gone down on both knees to curse me most earnestly. But times and tastes have altered, and Tennyson is the pet poet of the day."

A few days after, its author was announced as Wordsworth's successor to the poet-laureateship.

Thomas Deakin, Esq., of Sheffield, who died in the month of August in the preceding year, having left by will the sum of three thousand pounds towards the founding of a charity for elderly unmarried women, on condition that a like sum of three thousand pounds should be raised by others, within two years after the death of the testator, Montgomery willingly joined a number of gentlemen in an effort to realize this benevolent object. He also took part in what some of his townspeople regarded as a more questionable proceeding, namely, in calling, and seconding a resolution at, an anti-Catholic meeting. The resolution, indeed, was simply a vote expressive of gratitude to Lord John Russell for his recent admirable letter to the Bishop of Durham, for the thoroughly Protestant spirit which breathed through it; and a promise of support to his lord-

ship in all his endeavors to neutralize the aggressive policy of Rome. The proposition was objected to by a party in the meeting, on the ground of its inconsistency, — his lordship having, it was alleged, previously acted in such a way towards the Papists as might well encourage them to aggressions like those complained of; nor did the few words used by Montgomery, — “I second the resolution with all my heart,” — escape popular censure. The subject coming up in conversation afterwards, he said, that while he had never been a thorough-going party-man, and had never sought or expected to please people who were such, in the present case, as he had entirely agreed with Lord John Russell in reference to the necessity if not in the extent of Parliamentary reform, so he agreed with him generally in reference to Catholic emancipation; but he perfectly agreed with him in his present protest against the recent act of Papal aggression.

With an unabated interest in every public work, the talked of “Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations” early attracted his attention. The magnitude of the scheme, at first, almost awed him; and the Crystal Palace seemed to him far surpassing all the dreams of poetry. He read with avidity the details of its progress and completion, and more and more regarding the exhibition as significant of the supremacy of the peaceful, and therefore the true industries of the world, he wept for joy over the account of its inauguration, splendor, and enthusiasm. Overcoming the timidity and feebleness of age, he determined once more to revisit London, and look upon this wonder of the age. Accompanied by Miss Gales, and convoyed by his neighbor, Mr. Mitchell, early in July, 1851, an easy journey was effected to the metropolis. His brother Robert’s house in Woolwich was their tarrying-place. But a single

visit was paid to the Palace, hardly sufficient for a passing glance at its princely galleries, lined with the skill and produce of all forms of Christian civilization. The compartment which particularly arrested the attention of the poet, was that containing printed specimens of the Scriptures in one hundred and sixty-five different languages.

Renewed expressions of personal affection greeted him on his eightieth birth-day. On entering his sitting-room that morning, an elegant easy-chair of carved walnut occupied his place, and what was to him of more value than any personal luxury, a purse of fifty sovereigns for the "Moravian Fund," and sixty sovereigns for the "Aged Female Society" — gifts which could only flow from the delicate perceptions and Christian sensibilities of woman.

"Thanks, thanks, thanks," exclaimed the venerable old man; "thrice and four times thanks to my birth-day benefactors, for their precious tokens of good-will 'to a poor octogenarian.'

" 'Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life,' and my heart's desire and prayer is that I may realize the fulfilment of the verse, 'to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' "

The same friends induced him to allow an artist to model his likeness in profile for a "Montgomery Medal," to be given annually as a prize for the best drawing or casting of wild flowers produced by a pupil in the Sheffield "Government School of Design."

At noon, responding to a request which had been made at the annual meeting of Governors of the General Infirmary, Montgomery planted an oak tree on the lawn in front of the noble building; and he stood there the sole survivor of all its founders fifty years before.

“Montgomery ought to become expert in the use of the spade,” said one of his friends.

At the annual meeting of the School of Design the following year, the Duke of York presiding, the revered bard was called upon to present the prize medal to the successful competitor. “This public compliment is a testimony that you have done well,” said he; “always do your best, then you are sure always to do better.”

In July, he appeared for the last time as a public lecturer, before the Literary and Philosophical Society, with whose origin and growth he was so closely identified. Many of his friends felt it to be an outlay of pain he could ill afford, but many wished again to hear him, and to a repeated invitation he hesitatingly acquiesced.

At the meeting of the Methodist Conference held in Sheffield on the following month, though no laymen were allowed to attend its sessions, the general rule was in this instance set aside, and Montgomery received and accepted an invitation to be present, introduced by Dr. Hannah as a “venerable friend to whom Methodism was under great obligations.” The services which they, as a religious body, had received from him having been gratefully acknowledged by the President, their distinguished visitor arose and, with patriarchal simplicity, replied with deep emotion, “I have little to say, Christian fathers, friends and brethren, but that little, so important in itself, I utter from my heart. ‘The Lord bless and keep you! The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you! The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace!’ in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

“No incident,” says Dr. Bunting, “more tended to brighten and beautify the Conference of 1852;” for, as another preacher said, “even the venerable men present,

who had been the contemporaries of Wesley himself, seemed to be in the presence of an elder, when Montgomery, a member of the ancient Moravian Church, blessed the Conference, and the 'People called Methodists,' with the blessing wherewith Aaron and his sons blessed the children of Israel."

In December, the Earl of Carlisle delivered before the Mechanics' Institution a lecture on the Poetry of Gray, and though Montgomery had long ceased to attend evening meetings, he was present on this occasion. Preceding the Earl to the platform, he was greeted with applause scarcely less enthusiastic than the welcome given to the lecturer,—a right hearty burst of English appreciation of her true men. The glowing expression of the old poet's face disclosed his interest in the lecture, his own views harmonizing with those of the speaker, in everything except that which related to the religious element of Gray's poetry and character.

Montgomery, in his introductory essay to the *Christian Poet*, has already asked and answered an impartial question in reference to it:

"*What* God is intended in the last line of the Elegy, 'The bosom of his father and his God?'" he inquires. "Search every fragment of the writings of the celebrated author, and it will be difficult to answer this question, simple as it is, from them; from the Elegy itself it would be impossible; except that the God of the '*Youth* to fortune and to fame unknown' is meant; and that this may have been the true God, must be inferred from his worshipper having been buried 'in a country church-yard.' There is, indeed, a couplet like the following, in the body of the poem:

"'And many a *holy text* around she strews,
To teach the rustic moralist to die,'

but throughout the whole there is not a single allusion to 'an hereafter,' except what may be inferred, by courtesy, from the concluding line already mentioned. After the couplet above quoted, the poet leaves his 'rustic moralist to die,' and very pathetically refers to the natural unwillingness of the humblest individual to be forgotten, and the 'longing, lingering look,' which even the miserable cast behind, on leaving 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day;' but hope nor fear, doubt nor faith, concerning a *future* state, seems ever to have touched the poet's apprehensions, exquisitely affected as he must have been with all that interests 'mortal man' in the composition of those unrivalled stanzas;—unrivalled truly they are, though there is not an idea in them beyond the church-yard, in which they are said to have been written."

On the first of February, 1853, appeared "Original Hymns for Public, Social, and Private Devotion, by James Montgomery:" with the following verse from one of them, as a motto, on the title page:

"From young and old, with every breath,
Let prayer and praise arise;
Life be '*the daily offering*,'—death
'*The evening sacrifice*.'"

In the preface, the author adverts to the extent to which his compositions of this class have been appropriated by compilers; adding, that "of this he has never complained, being rather humbly thankful that any imperfect strains of his should be thus employed in giving *glory to God in the highest*, promoting *on earth peace*, and diffusing good-will towards man." But of the liberties taken by some of these in modifying certain passages according to their peculiar tastes and notions, he must complain; very properly sug-

gesting to such, that if they cannot “conscientiously adopt *his* diction and doctrine, it is surely unreasonable in them to impose upon him theirs, which he might as honestly hesitate to receive.” He closes what he calls this “long preamble to the most serious work of a long life — now passing four-score years” — with the following appropriate lines from Bishop Ken :

“And should the well-meant song I leave behind,
With Jesus’ lovers some acceptance find,
'Twill heighten even the joys of heaven to know
That in my verse saints sung God’s praise below.”

Lucy Aikin, to whom he sent a volume, thus pleasantly acknowledges it :

“DEAR FRIEND,

“Many thanks to you for your kind present of your volume of Hymns. They were very agreeable and acceptable to me, not alone as a proof of your never-failing remembrance and friendship, but for their own merits. I tell you the simplest truth in saying, that I regard you as quite at the head of all living writers of this kind of poetry within my knowledge. Your hymns have an earnestness, a fervor of piety, and an unmistakeable sincerity which goes straight to the heart. In the style, too, you are perfectly successful, and it is one in which few are masters. Clear, direct, simple, plain to the humblest member of a congregation, yet glowing with poetic fire, and steeped in Scripture: not in its peculiar phrases so much, which might give an air of quaintness, as filled with its spirit, and with allusions to its characters and incidents often extremely happy, and what might well be called ingenious. My father would not have forgotten to add a merit to which

he was extremely sensible, as indeed am I — that the lines flow very harmoniously, and are *richly rhymed* — with their full complement of two to a stanza. This is an aid to the memory as well as the immediate effect. I rejoice that you lend your powerful support to the anti-Calvinistic theology, and strenuously inculcate that every man may be saved if he pleases.

“Although you may think it right to bridle your indignation against the interpolators of your Hymns, there is no reason I should : and I do not. It is an intolerable fraud — worse by far than forging one’s name to a cheque ; and nothing, I suppose, but the paucity of really good hymns which speak exactly the language of this or that compiler for a congregation, could have tempted decent people to be guilty of it. Poor Dr. Watts has been victimized to such an extent in this manner for a century past, that I have been told a genuine Watts is now a curiosity scarcely anywhere to be met with. Better fate be yours ; but I dare not promise it you, if you will write so well, and enounce your doctrines with so much point and force, instead of dwelling in neutral generalities, equally suited to all sects of Christians.

“Are you aware that I have again taken up my abode in the old spot where we saw each other’s face for the last time, doubtless, in this world ? Yes ; last Christmas twelve month, I quitted Wimbledon with my niece and her family, after what had been to me a five years’ sojourn in a strange place, and came with them to dear old Hampstead, where I have a few friends and relations still remaining, whose society is worth far more to me than the most splendid new acquaintances could possibly be. One dear brother, my eldest, is still left me ; and we are but three miles apart. Here I am in the midst of an amiable young

family, to whom I feel myself almost a grandmamma. Many, many blessings to be thankful for at the age of seventy-one! Of your health I have lately heard good tidings. Long may it continue! Believe me ever, dear and respected friend, yours most sincerely,

“LUCY AIKIN.

“Hampstead, February 13, 1853.”

The year 1854 broke stormily over England. The severity and length of the cold kept all prudent invalids within doors, and especially barred the aged from their accustomed out-door air and exercise. Montgomery imprisoned himself for many weeks, and went out but seldom, until longer days gave promise of warmer weather.

Tardy spring at last threw its emerald folds over the fields, and the poet again went forth rejoicing in the joy of beautiful and well-created things.

His friends marked an increasing feebleness of body, while the mind, with occasionally a slight failure of memory, retained its wonted relish for books, conversation, and all the stirring incidents of the times. His correspondence had flagged; the hand, not the heart, rendering unwilling obedience to the monitions of friendship or of poetry.

Two hymns, composed in April, were, “the last fruit off an old tree;” one to gratify a friend, and the other for the “little ones” of the Sunday-school Union, an evangelical alliance always dear to the poet’s heart.

Easter, a high festival among the Moravians, Montgomery designed to spend at Fulneck. Instead of going, however, he despatched a letter, excusing his absence. It was addressed to his favorite niece Harriet, now Mrs. Mallalien, who says:

“My dear uncle frequently spent part of the Passion

Week and Easter with us, both at Ockbrook and Fulneck. I heard from him very early in April ; and his last letter to me was dated on the 12th, not much more than a fortnight before he left his earthly for his heavenly home. I was looking at his letter last night, and cannot help transcribing a sentence or two from it. He says :

“ ‘ To-morrow, had I been free from hindrance otherwise than personal, I should have indeed been happy to have made an Easter campaign to the scene of my childhood, and the best days of my youth : to live the latter over again ; and especially to spend another Maundy Thursday, which then was (I may frankly own it) to me the happiest day in the year : the evening reading in the chapel, of our Saviour’s agony and bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, was almost always a season of holy humbling and affecting sympathy of my soul with His, who then was wont to make His presence felt. And on Good Friday, Great Sabbath, and Easter Sunday, each had its peculiar visits in spirit, and of these the remembrance is sweet and consoling ; and even yet, after so many years of estrangement and unfaithfulness on my part, since I chose my portion for myself in the world, rather than in my Father’s house and among my Christian brethren, I can say, — “ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ! ” — hoping, praying, and earnestly desiring that I may yet add the context — (Ps. ciii. 3, 4,) “ Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” ’ Then he adds, with all his own warmth of affection, ‘ Now my dear, dear Harriet, may you and your children, and your best of mothers, ever, ever be enabled to offer such thanksgivings daily and to the end.’ ”

“I do value that letter, written so shortly before his death. The season of the year coming round again [Easter, 1855], too, has made the last year dwell much on my mind; so fondly had my dear mother and I hoped to have seen uncle here; and now they have both joined the Church Triumphant!”

For, the places which knew him so intimately and so long, were soon to know him no more.

On the last Friday in April he attended as usual the weekly board-meeting of the Infirmary, of which, for many years he had been chairman; and on Saturday afternoon called upon Mr. Holland at his office in the Music Hall. To an inquiry about his health, “I feel considerable oppression *here*,” he answered, laying his hand on his breast—and a shade of more than usual thoughtfulness rested upon his countenance.

At evening worship, he requested Miss Gales to read the Scriptures, when he led the devotional service with an earnestness and pathos which excited the attention of the family. No complaint, however, fell from his lips, and he retired as usual with nothing to indicate that this was his last “good night.”

Sabbath morning dawned, and at eight one of the servants knocked at his door, but receiving no answer, she opened it and saw her master insensible on the floor.

The family were soon aroused, and assistance speedily came, and he was returned to his bed, while consciousness seemed flitting back.

A physician was summoned, and the patient rallied, so rapidly, indeed, that everything promised a speedy restoration.

As Miss Gales sat and watched at his bedside during the afternoon, a sudden change came over his face. He seemed to have been sleeping—

“No — life had sweetly ceased to be :
It lapsed in immortality ;”

and soon the solemn tolling of the church-bell spread the tidings round that Sheffield had lost its most beloved and distinguished citizen. A great and good man had fallen. It was the 30th of April, 1854.

The funeral took place on the 11th of May, amidst such demonstrations of respect as were never paid to any individual in Sheffield before. The shops were generally closed. Manufactories and other places of business were deserted. The houses showed signs of mourning. Along the route of procession, the house-tops and windows, and the sides of the streets, were filled with respectful spectators. Great numbers of people were upon the parish and St. Paul's churches, in the church-yards, and on every elevation that commanded a view of the route.

The following was the order of the procession, and of the proceedings at the place of interment :

Mounted Police.

Two Mutes.

Deputations from the Committees and Managers of the Church of England Instruction Society ; the Sheffield Mechanics' Library ; the Athenæum ; the Lyceum ; the Red Hill Schools ; Sunday-school Union ; Lancasterian Schools ; People's College ; Government School of Design ; Rotherham College ; Sheffield Library ; Literary and Philosophical Society.

Gentlemen of the Town and Neighborhood in Carriages ;

Managers of the Savings' Bank ;

Committee and Medical Officers of the Sheffield Public Dispensary ;

Managers of the Aged Female Society ;

Directors of the United Gas-Light Company ;

Board of Guardians for Sheffield ;

The Weekly Board and Medical Officers of the Sheffield General
Infirmary ;

The Police Commissioners ;
 The Ecclesall Highway Board ;
 The Board of Highways for the Township of Sheffield ;
 Dissenting Ministers ;
 Wesleyan Ministers ;
 The Church Burgesses ;
 The Town Regent, and Trustees ;
 The Master Cutler (W. A. Matthews, Esq.), and Company ;
 Bishop and Ministers of the Church of the United Brethren ;
 The Vicar of Sheffield and twenty-four of the Clergy ;
 Officers of the West Riding Yeomanry ;
 Coroner and Deputy Coroner for the District ;
 The Magistrates for the Borough ;
 The Magistrates for the West Riding ;
 Clerk to the Magistrates ;
 The Judge and Treasurer of the County Court ;
 The Mayor, (Francis Hoole, Esq., attended by Mr. Raynor, Chief
 Constable,) and Corporation ;
 G. Hadfield, Esq., M.P. for Sheffield ;
 The Funeral Committee ;
 William Favell, Esq., Surgeon to the Deceased ;
 Thomas Gould, Esq., Solicitor to the Deceased ;

PALL-BEARERS.

Rev. H. Farish.
 Rev. Jas. Methley.
 Rev. C. Larom.
 Saml. Roberts, Esq.

THE BODY,

In a hearse drawn
 by six horses.

PALL-BEARERS.

Rev. Thomas Best.
 Rev. S. D. Waddy.
 Rev. J. H. Muir.
 Samuel Baily, Esq.

Four Mourning Coaches ;

In the first coach, Robert Montgomery, of Woolwich, brother of the
 deceased ; the Rev. John James Montgomery, Miss Gales,
 and Mrs. Foster, niece of the deceased ;

Second coach, Mrs. Mallalien, niece of the deceased ; Mrs. John
 James Montgomery, Mr. John Holland, and the
 Rev. W. Mercer ;

Third and fourth coaches, the Pall-Bearers. Each coach was drawn
 by four horses ;

Gentlemen of the Town and Neighborhood on foot;
Deputation of the Montgomery Sick Society,
Deputation of Scripture Readers;
Masters of Wesley College;
Twenty Gownsmen and one hundred of the Scholars of
Wesley College;
Pupils of Dr. Munro's School,
Gentlemen of the Town and Neighborhood on horseback;
Mounted Police.

About an hour elapsed from the arrival of the first part of the procession at the gates of the cemetery before the hearse, with its attendants, reached the consecrated enclosure, where the coffin was taken out of the hearse, and the pall-bearers assumed their places; the vicar in his gown, and the Rev. George Sandford in his surplice, preceding the solemn cortege up the avenue, and through the winding roads of the cemetery. It had been arranged to admit ladies into the cemetery ground at an early hour in the forenoon, and they formed its principal occupants when the funeral entered. But crowds of spectators were to be seen at all the adjacent points commanding a view of the ground; and on the hill-side, across the valley, were hundreds of observers. When the procession had entered, the gates were opened to the public, and a dense assemblage quickly filled the ground. The favorable state of the weather permitted the whole of the burial service to be performed in the open air; the Rev. T. Sale, M.A., the vicar, and the Rev. G. Sandford, M.A., the chaplain of the cemetery, officiating. At its conclusion, the vicar said: "Having committed the body of our dear brother to the grave, in the full belief of his triumphant resurrection, let us sing over his grave one of those hymns which in past days he composed for one gone before him:*

* Dr. Owen, Secretary of the Bible Society, who died 1822.

“Go to the grave; though, like a fallen tree,
At once with verdure, flowers, and fruitage crowned,
Thy form may perish, and thine honors be
Lost in the mouldering bosom of the ground;—

“Go to the grave, which, faithful to its trust,
The germ of immortality shall keep;
While safe, as watched by cherubim, thy dust
Shall, till the judgment-day, in JESUS sleep.

“Go to the grave, for there thy Saviour lay
In Death's embraces, ere He rose on high;
And all the ransomed, by that narrow way,
Pass to eternal life beyond the sky.

“Go to the grave;—no, take thy seat above;
Be thy pure spirit present with the Lord,
Where thou, for faith and hope, hast perfect love,
And open vision for the written Word.”

After the retirement of the mourners, hundreds of persons crowded round the grave to take a farewell look at the coffin, of plain oak, with a silvered plate bearing the following inscription :

JAMES MONTGOMERY,
Died April the 30th, 1854,
In the 83rd year of his Age.

Montgomery left an estate of £9,000. Generous legacies were willed to several Moravian institutions and city charities. But dear friends were not forgotten, and the remainder was equally shared between the two families of his brothers.

Thus peacefully closed a long and useful life. Changes, almost marvellous, took place within its more than four-score years. The American colonies had broken from the parent stock and grown to a mighty nation. England

had had her Foxes, Pitts, and Wellingtons. Steam had changed rough Atlantic voyages into holiday trips. Lumbering mail-coaches were outrun by the furious drive of the fiery horse. Gas had left the laboratory of the chemist and become drilled to nightly service. The wildest freaks of electricity had entered into the soberest calculations of business. Protestant Christianity burst forth with new power. Its agencies had spanned the world. The Bible, with its sturdy vitality, became the recognized civilizer of man. Missionary institutions grew into a commercial value. And all around, the common industries of life are vigorous and gainful only as they are nourished by the redeeming influences of the gospel.

With the religious progress of his time, Montgomery identified himself. Life was an earnest and responsible work with him. He had something to do for the moral renovation of others, and his *heart* was in doing it. England and the world are better that he and such men have lived.

His piety embalms his genius. And long after prouder literary achievements shall have been buried in the dust of the Past, his simple hymns will linger on the lip of devotion, and nestle in the loving hearts of believers from the Moravian altars of Herrnhut to the "forest sanctuaries" of the tropics.

The worth of a Christian life, time cannot diminish, and nothing can destroy. It has an imperishable value in the treasury of that Kingdom which will finally swallow up all the powers and principalities of earth.

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